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THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN OWEN, D.D.

EDITED

BY THOMAS RUSSELL, M.A.

WITH

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY WILLIAM ORME.

VOL. XII.

CONTAINING

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ: OR, A DECLARATION OF THE GLORIOUS MYSTERY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST;

AND MEDITATIONS AND DISCOURSES ON THE GLORY OF CHRIST, IN HIS PERSON, OFFICE, AND GRACE.

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ΧΡΙΣΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ:

OR,

A DECLARATION

OF THE

GLORIOUS MYSTERY

OF

THE PERSON OF CHRIST,

GOD AND MAN.

WITH

THE INFINITE WISDOM, LOVE, AND POWER
OF GOD IN THE CONTRIVANCE AND CONSTITUTION THEREOF: AS ALSO,
OF THE GROUNDS AND REASONS OF HIS INCARNATION;
THE NATURE OF HIS MINISTRY IN HEAVEN;
THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CHURCH ABOVE THEREON; AND
THE USE OF HIS PERSON IN RELIGION.

WITH

AN ACCOUNT AND VINDICATION OF THE
HONOUR, WORSHIP, FAITH, LOVE, AND OBEDIENCE, DUE UNTO HIM,
IN AND FROM THE CHURCH.

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.—PHIL. iii. 8.

THE PREFACE.

It is a great promise concerning the person of Christ, as he was to be given unto the church, (for he was a child born, a son given unto us, Isa. ix. 6.) that God would 'lay him in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation, whereon he that believeth, shall not make haste;' Isa. xxviii. 16. Yet was it also foretold concerning him, that this precious foundation should be 'for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin, and for a snare unto the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so as that many among them should stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken;' Isa. viii. 14, 15. According unto this promise and prediction, it hath fallen out in all ages of the church, as the apostle Peter declares concerning the first of them; 'Wherefore,' saith he, 'also it was contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him, shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even unto them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed;' 1 Epist. ii. 6—8.

Unto them that believe unto the saving of the soul, he is, he always hath been, precious; the sun, the rock, the life, the bread of their souls, every thing that is good, useful, amiable, desirable here or unto eternity. In, from, and by him, is all their spiritual and eternal

life, light, power, growth, consolation, and joy here; with everlasting salvation hereafter. By him alone do they desire, expect, and obtain deliverance from that woful apostacy from God, which is accompanied withal, which containeth in it virtually and meritoriously, whatever is evil, noxious, and destructive unto our nature, and which, without relief, will issue in eternal misery. By him are they brought into the nearest cognation, alliance, and friendship with God, the firmest union unto him, and the most holy communion with him, that our finite natures are capable of, and so conducted unto the eternal enjoyment of him. For in him 'shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory;' Isa. xlv. 25. 'For Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end;' ver. 17.

On these and the like accounts, the principal design of their whole lives unto whom he is thus precious, is to acquaint themselves with him, the mystery of the wisdom, grace, and love of God, in his person and mediation, as revealed unto us in the Scripture, which is 'life eternal;' John xvii. 3. to trust in him, and unto him; as unto all the everlasting concernments of their souls; to love and honour him with all their hearts; to endeavour after conformity unto him, in all those characters of divine goodness and holiness, which are represented unto them in him. In these things consist the soul, life, power, beauty, and efficacy of Christian religion; without which, whatever outward ornaments may be put upon its exercise, it is but a useless, lifeless carcase. The whole of this design is expressed in those heavenly words of the apostle, Phil. iii. 8—12. 'Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I might win Christ, and be

found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' This is a divine expression of that frame of heart, of that design which is predominant and efficacious in them unto whom Christ is precious.

But on the other hand, according unto the forementioned prediction, as he hath been a sure foundation unto all that believe; so he hath in like manner been a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, unto them that stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto they also were appointed. There is nothing in him, nothing wherein he is concerned, nothing of him, his person, his natures, his office, his grace, his love, his power, his authority, his relation unto the church, but it hath been unto many a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. Concerning these things have been all the woful contests, which have fallen out and been managed among those that outwardly have made profession of the Christian religion. And the contentions about them do rather increase than abate, unto this very day; the dismal fruits whereof the world groaneth under, and is no longer able to bear. For as the opposition unto the Lord Christ in these things by men of perverse minds, hath ruined their own souls, as having dashed themselves in pieces against this everlasting rock; so in conjunction with others lusts and interests of the carnal minds of men, it hath filled the world itself with blood and confusion.

The re-enthroning of the person, spirit, grace, and authority of Christ, in the hearts and consciences of men, is the only way whereby an end may be put unto these woful conflicts. But this is not to be expected in any degree of perfection, amongst them who stumble at this stone of offence, whereunto they are appointed; though in the issue he will herein also send forth judgment unto victory, and all the meek of the earth shall follow after it. In the meantime, as those unto whom he is thus a rock of offence, in his person, his spirit, his grace, his office, and authority, are diligent and restless (in their various ways and forms, in lesser or higher degrees, in secret artifices, or open contradictions unto any or all of them, under various pretences, and for divers ends, even secular advantages some of them, which the craft of Satan hath prepared for the ensnaring of them) in all ways of opposition unto his glory; so it is the highest duty of them unto whom he is precious, whose principal design is to be found built on him as the sure foundation; as to hold the truth concerning him (his person, spirit, grace, office, and authority), and to abound in all duties of faith, love, trust, honour, and delight in him; so also to declare his excellency, to plead the cause of his glory, to vindicate his honour, and to witness him the only rest and reward of the souls of men, as they are called and have opportunity.

This and no other is the design of the ensuing treatise; wherein, as all things fall unspeakably short of the glory, excellency, and sublimity of the subject treated of, for no mind can conceive, no tongue can express, the real substantial glory of them; so there is no doubt but that in all the parts of it, there is a reflection of failings and imperfections from the weakness of its author. But yet I must say with confidence, that in the whole, that eternal truth of God concerning the mys-

tery of his wisdom, love, grace, and power, in the person and mediation of Christ, with our duties towards himself therein, even the Father, Son, and eternal Spirit, is pleaded and vindicated, which shall never be shaken by the utmost endeavours and oppositions of the gates of hell.

And in the acknowledgment of the truth concerning these things consists that faith in an especial manner, which was the life and glory of the primitive church, which they earnestly contended for, wherein and whereby they were victorious against all the troops of stumbling adversaries, by whom it was assaulted. In giving testimony hereunto, they loved not their lives unto death, but poured out their blood like water, under all the pagan persecutions, which had no other design but to cast them down and separate them from this impregnable rock, this precious foundation. In the defence of these truths did they conflict in prayers, studies, travels, and writings, against the swarms of seducers by whom they were opposed. And for this cause I thought to have confirmed the principal passages of the ensuing discourse with some testimonies from the most ancient writers of the first ages of the church; but I omitted that course, as fearing that the interposition of such passages might obstruct instead of promoting the edification of the common sort of readers, which I principally intended. Yet withal I thought not good utterly to neglect that design, but to give at least a specimen of their sentiments about the principal truths pleaded for, in this preface to the whole. But herein also I met with a disappointment; for the bookseller having, unexpectedly unto me, finished the printing of the discourse itself, I must be contented to make use of what lieth already collected under my hand, not having leisure or time to make any farther inquiry.

I shall do something of this nature the rather because I shall have occasion thereby to give a summary account of some of the principal parts of the discourse itself, and to clear some passages in it, which by some may be apprehended obscure.

Chap. i. The foundation of the whole is laid in the vindication of those words of our blessed Saviour, wherein he declares himself to be the rock whereon the church is built. Matt. xvi. 18. 'And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' The pretended ambiguity of these words, hath been wrested by the secular interests of men to give occasion unto that prodigious controversy among Christians, namely, whether Jesus Christ or the pope of Rome be the rock whereon the church is built. Those holy men of old unto whom Christ was precious, being untainted with the desires of secular grandeur and power, knew nothing hereof. Testimonies may be, they have been, multiplied by others unto this purpose; I shall mention some few of them.

Οὗτος ἐστιν ἡ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἄγουσα ὁδὸς, ἡ πέτρα, ἡ κλεὶς ὁ ποιμὴν, &c. saith Ignatius, Epist. ad Philadelph. 'He' (that is, Christ) 'is the way leading unto the Father, the rock, the key, the shepherd;' wherein he hath respect unto this testimony. And Origen expressly denies the words to be spoken of Peter, in Matt. xvi. Tract 1. 'Quod si super unum illum Petrum tantum existimes totam ecclesiam ædificari, quid dicturus es de Johanne, et apostolorum unoquoque? Num audebimus dicere quod adversus Petrum unum non prevalituræ sunt portæ inferorum?' 'If you shall think that the whole church was built on Peter alone, what shall we say of John, and each of the apostles? What, shall we dare to say that the gates of hell shall not prevail against Peter only?' So he according unto the common

opinion of the ancients, that there was nothing peculiar in the confession of Peter, and the answer made thereunto, as unto himself, but that he spake and was spoken unto in the name of all the rest of the apostles. Euseb. Præparat. Evangel. lib. i. cap. 3. Ἥτε ὀνομαστὶ προθεσπιθεῖσα ἐκκλησία αὐτοῦ ἥστηκε κατὰ βάθους ἐρριζωπένη, καὶ μέχρις οὐρανίων ἀψίδων εὐχαῖς ὁσίων καὶ θεοφιλῶν ἀνδρῶν μετεοριζομένη——διὰ μίαν ἐκείνην, ἣν αὐτὸς ἀποφήνητο λέξιν, εἴπων, Ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν οἰκοδομήσω μου την ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ πύλαι ἅδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς. 'He proves the verity of divine predictions from the glorious accomplishment of that word and the promise of our Saviour, that he would build his church on the rock' (that is, himself), 'so as that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. For 'unum hoc est immobile fundamentum, una hæc est fælix fidei Petra, Petri ore confessa, Tu es filius Dei vivi,' saith Hilar. de Trin. lib. 2. 'This is the only immoveable foundation; this is the blessed rock of faith, confessed by Peter; Thou art the Son of the living God.' And Epiphanus, Hær. 39. Ἐπὶ τῇ πέτρα ταύτῃ τῆς ἀσφαλοῦς πίστεως οἰκοδομήσω μοῦ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν· 'Upon this rock,' of assured faith, 'I will build my church.' For many thought that faith itself was metonymically called the rock, because of its object, or the person of Christ, which is so.

One or two more out of Austin shall close these testimonies. 'Super hanc Petram, quam confessus es, super meipsum filium Dei vivi, ædificabo ecclesiam meam. Super me ædificabo te, non me super te;' De verbis Dom. Serm. 13. 'Upon this rock which thou hast confessed, upon myself the Son of the living God, I will build my church. I will build thee upon myself, and not myself on thee.' And he more fully declareth his mind, Tract. 124. in Johan. 'Ecclesia in hoc seculo diversis tentationibus, velut imbribus, fluminibus, tempestatibusque quatitur, et non cadit; quoniam fun-

data est supra Petram; unde et Petrus nomen accepit. Non enim a Petro Petra, sed Petrus a Petra; sicut non Christus a Christiano, sed Christianus a Christo vocatur. Ideo quippe ait Dominus super hanc Petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam, quia dixerat Petrus, tu es Christus filius Dei vivi; super hanc ergo (inquit) Petram quam confessus es, ædificabo ecclesiam meam. Petra enim erat Christus, supra quod fundamentum etiam ipse ædificatus est Petrus; fundamentum quippe aliud nemo potest ponere, præter id quod positum est, quod est Jesus Christus.' 'The church in this world is shaken with divers temptations, as with showers, floods, and tempests, yet falleth not, because it is built on the rock *(Petra)* from whence Peter took his name. For the rock is not called *Petra* from Peter, but Peter is so called from *Petra* the rock; as Christ is not so called from Christian, but Christian from Christ. Therefore said the Lord, Upon this rock will I build my church; because Peter had said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. Upon this rock, which thou hast confessed, will I build my church. For Christ himself was the rock on which foundation Peter himself was built. For other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

Chap. ii. Against this rock, this foundation of the church, the person of Christ, and the faith of the church concerning it, great opposition hath been made by the gates of hell. Not to mention the rage of the pagan world, endeavouring by all effects of violence and cruelty to cast the church from this foundation; all the heresies wherewith from the beginning, and for some centuries of years ensuing it was pestered, consisted in direct and immediate oppositions unto the eternal truth concerning the person of Christ. Some that are so esteemed indeed, never pretended unto any sobriety, but were mere effects of delirant imaginations; yet

did even they also one way or other derive from an hatred unto the person of Christ, and centred therein. Their beginning was early in the church, even before the writing of the Gospel by John or his Revelations, and indeed before some of Paul's epistles. And although their beginning was but small, and seemingly contemptible, yet, being full of the poison of the old serpent, they diffused themselves in various shapes and forms, until there was nothing left of Christ, nothing that related unto him, not his natures, divine or human, not their properties nor actings, not his person, nor the union of his natures therein, that was not opposed and assaulted by them. Especially so soon as the gospel had subdued the Roman empire unto Christ, and was owned by the rulers of it, the whole world was for some ages filled with uproars, confusion, and scandalous disorders about the person of Christ, through the cursed oppositions made thereunto by the gates of hell. Neither had the church any rest from these conflicts for about five hundred years. But near that period of time, the power of truth and religion beginning universally to decay among the outward professors of them, Satan took advantage to make that havoc and destruction of the church, by superstition, false worship, and profaneness of life, which he failed of in his attempt against the person of Christ, or the doctrine of truth concerning it.

It would be a tedious work, and it may be not of much profit unto them who are utterly unacquainted with things so long past and gone, wherein they seem to have no concernment, to give a specimen of the several heresies whereby attempts were made against this rock and foundation of the church; unto those who have inquired into the records of antiquity, it would be altogether useless. For almost every page of them at first view presents the readers with an account of

some one or more of them. Yet do I esteem it useful that the very ordinary sort of Christians should at least in general be acquainted with what hath passed in this great contest about the person of Christ from the beginning. For there are two things relating thereunto, wherein their faith is greatly concerned. For first, there is evidence given therein unto the truth of those predictions of the Scripture wherein this fatal apostacy from the truth, and opposition unto the Lord Christ, are foretold: and, secondly, an eminent instance of his power and faithfulness in the disappointment and conquest of the gates of hell, in the management of this opposition. But they have been all reckoned up, and digested into methods of time and matter, by many learned men of old, and of late, so that I shall not in this occasional discourse, represent them unto the reader again. Only I shall give a brief account of the ways and means whereby they who retained the profession of the truth, contended for it unto a conquest over the pernicious heresies wherewith it was opposed.

The defence of the truth from the beginning, was left in charge unto, and managed by, the guides and rulers of the church in their several capacities. And by the Scripture it was that they discharged their duty, confirmed with apostolical tradition consonant thereunto. This was left in charge unto them by the great apostle; Acts xx. 28—31. 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. 2 Tim. ii. 1, 2. 15. 23, 24. iv. 1—4. and wherein any of them failed in this duty, they were reproved by Christ himself; Rev. ii. 14, 15. 20. Nor were private believers in their places and capacities, either unable for this duty, or exempt from it, but discharged themselves faithfully therein, according unto commandment given unto them; 1 John ii. 20. 27. iv. 1—3. 2 John viii. 8, 9. All true believers in their several stations,

by mutual watchfulness, preaching, or writing, according unto their calls and abilities, effectually used the outward means for the preservation and propagation of the faith of the church. And the same means are still sufficient unto the same ends, were they attended unto with conscience and diligence. The pretended defence of truth with arts and arms of another kind, hath been the bane of religion, and lost the peace of Christians beyond recovery. And it may be observed, that whilst this way alone for the preservation of the truth was insisted on and pursued, that although innumerable heresies arose one after another, and sometimes many together, yet they never made any great progress, nor arrived unto any such consistency, as to make a stated opposition unto the truth; but the errors themselves and their authors were as vagrant meteors, which appeared for a little while, and vanished away. Afterward it was not so, when other ways and means for the suppression of heresies were judged convenient and needful.

For in process of time, when the power of the Roman empire gave countenance and protection unto Christian religion, another way was fixed on for this end, namely, the use of such assemblies of bishops and others as they called general councils, armed with a mixed power, partly civil, and partly ecclesiastical, with respect unto the authority of the emperors, and that jurisdiction in the church which began then to be first talked of. This way was begun in the council of Nice, wherein although there was a determination of the doctrine concerning the person of Christ then in agitation, and opposed, as unto his divine nature therein, according unto the truth, yet sundry evils and inconveniences ensued thereon. For thenceforth the faith of Christians began greatly to be resolved into the authority of men, and as much, if not more weight to be laid on what

was decreed by the fathers there assembled, than on what was clearly taught in the Scriptures. Besides, being necessitated, as they thought, to explain their conceptions of the divine nature of Christ, in words either not used in the Scripture, or whose signification unto that purpose was not determined therein, occasion was given unto endless contentions about them. The Grecians themselves could not for a long season agree among themselves whether οὐσία and ὑπόστασις were of the same signification or no, both of them denoting essence and substance; or whether they differed in their signification; or if they did, wherein that difference lay. Athanasius at first affirmed them to be the same, Orat. 5. con. Arian. and Epist. ad African. Basil denied them so to be, or that they were used unto the same purpose in the council of Nice, Epist. 78. The like difference immediately fell out between the Grecians and Latins, about 'hypostasis' and 'persona.' For the Latins rendered 'hypostasis' by 'substantia,' and 'persona' by πρόσωπον. Hereof Jerome complains, in his epistle to Damasus, that they required of him in the east to confess 'tres hypostases,' and he would only acknowledge 'tres personas,' Epist. 71. And Austin gives an account of the same difference, de Trinitate, lib. 5. cap. 8, 9. Athanasius endeavoured the composing of this difference, and in a good measure effected it, as Gregory of Nazianzen affirms in his oration concerning his praise. It was done by him in a synod at Alexandria, in the first year of Julian's reign. On this occasion many contests arose even among them who all pleaded their adherence unto the doctrine of the council of Nice. And as the subtle Arians made incredible advantage hereof at first, pretending that they opposed not the Deity of Christ, but only the expression of it by ὁμοούσιος; so afterward they countenanced themselves in coining words and terms to express their minds with, which utterly re-

jected it. Hence were their ὁμοιούσιος, ἑτεροούσιος, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, and the like names of blasphemy, about which the contests were fierce and endless. And there were yet farther evils that ensued hereon. For the curious and serpentine wits of men, finding themselves by this means set at liberty to think and discourse of those mysteries of the blessed Trinity, and the person of Christ, without much regard unto plain divine testimonies, in such ways wherein cunning and sophistry did much bear sway, began to multiply such new, curious, and false notions about them, especially about the latter, as caused new disturbances, and those of large extent and long continuance. For their suppression, councils were called on the neck of another, whereon commonly new occasions of differences did arise, and most of them managed with great scandal unto Christian religion. For men began much to forego the primitive ways of opposing errors, and extinguishing heresies, betaking themselves unto their interest, the number of their party, and prevalency with the present emperors. And although it so fell out, as in that at Constantinople, the first at Ephesus, and that at Chalcedon, that the truth for the substance of it did prevail (for in many others it happened quite otherwise), yet did they always give occasions unto new divisions, animosities, and even mutual hatreds, among the principal leaders of the Christian people. And great contests there were among some of them who pretended to believe the same truth, whether such or such a council should be received, that is plainly, whether the church should resolve its faith into their authority. The strifes of this nature about the first Ephesian council, and that at Chalcedon, not to mention them wherein the Arians prevailed, take up a good part of the ecclesiastical story of those days. And it cannot be denied but that some of the principal

persons and assemblies who adhered unto the truth, did in the heat of opposition unto the heresies of other men, fall into unjustifiable excess themselves.

We may take an instance hereof with respect unto the Nestorian heresy, condemned in the first Ephesian council, and afterward in that at Chalcedon. Cyrillus of Alexandria, a man learned and vehement, designed by all means to be unto it, what his predecessor Athanasius had been to the Arian. But he fell into such excesses in his undertakings, as gave great occasion unto farther tumults. For it is evident that he distinguisheth not between ὑπόστασις, and φύσις, and therefore affirms, that the divine Word and humanity had μίαν φύσιν, one nature only. So he doth plainly in Epist. ad Successum; 'they are ignorant,' saith he, ὅτι κατ' ἀλήθειαν ἐστὶ μία φύσις τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμενη. Hence Eutyches the Archimandrite took occasion to run into a contrary extreme, being a no less fierce enemy to Nestorius than Cyrillus was. For to oppose him who divided the person of Christ into two, he confounded his natures into one, his delirant folly being confirmed by that goodly assembly, the second at Ephesus. Besides, it is confessed that Cyrillus, through the vehemency of his spirit, hatred unto Nestorius, and following the conduct of his own mind in nice and subtle expressions of the great mystery of the person of Christ, did utter many things exceeding the bounds of sobriety prescribed unto us by the apostle, Rom. xii. 3. if not those of truth itself. Hence it is come to pass, that many learned men begin to think and write that Cyrillus was in the wrong, and Nestorius by his means condemned undeservedly. However, it is certain to me, that the doctrine condemned at Ephesus and Chalcedon as the doctrine of Nestorius, was destructive of the true person of Christ; and that Cyril, though he missed

ndry expressions, yet aimed at the declaration nfirmation of the truth; as he was long since ated by Theorianus, Dialog. con. Armenios.

However, such was the watchful care of Christ the church as unto the preservation of this sacred, damental truth, concerning his divine person, and union of his natures therein, retaining their distinct properties and operations, that notwithstanding all the faction and disorder that were in those primitive councils, and scandalous contests of many of the members of them; notwithstanding the determination contrary unto it in great and numerous councils; the faith of it was preserved entire in the hearts of all that truly believed, and triumphed over the gates of hell.

I have mentioned these few things which belong unto the promise and prediction of our blessed Saviour, Matt. xvi. 18. the place insisted on, to shew that the church without any disadvantage to the truth, may be preserved without such general assemblies, which in the following ages proved the most pernicious engines for the corruption of the faith, worship, and manners of it. Yea, from the beginning they were so far from being the only way of preserving truth, that it was almost constantly prejudiced by the addition of their authority unto the confirmation of it. Nor was there any one of them wherein the mystery of iniquity did not work unto the laying of some rubbish in the foundation of that fatal apostacy, which afterward openly ensued. The Lord Christ himself hath taken it upon him, to build his church on this rock of his person, by true faith of it and in it. He sends his Holy Spirit to bear testimony unto him, in all the blessed effects of his power and grace. He continueth his word with the faithful ministry of it, to reveal, declare, make known, and vindicate his sacred truth, unto the con-

viction of gainsayers. He keeps up that faith in him, that love unto him, in the hearts of all his elect, as shall not be prevailed against. Wherefore, although the oppositions unto this sacred truth, this fundamental article of the church and Christian religion, concerning his divine person, its constitution, and use, as the human nature conjoined substantially unto it, and subsisteth in it, are in this last age increased; although they are managed under so great a variety of forms, as that they are not reducible unto any heads of order; although they are promoted with more subtlety and specious pretences than in former ages; yet, if we are not wanting unto our duty, with the aids of grace proposed unto us, we shall finally triumph in this cause, and transmit this sacred truth inviolate unto them that succeed us in the profession of it.

Chap. iii. This person of Christ, which is the foundation whereon the church is built, whereunto all sorts of oppositions are endeavoured and designed, is the most ineffable effect of divine goodness and wisdom; whereof we treat in the next place. But herein when I speak of the constitution of the person of Christ, I intend not his person absolutely as he is the eternal Son of God. He was truly, really, completely, a divine person from eternity, which is included in the notion of his being the Son, and so distinct from the Father, which is his complete personality. His being so was not a voluntary contrivance or effect of divine wisdom and goodness, his eternal generation being a necessary internal act of the divine nature in the person of the Father.

Of the eternal generation of the divine person of the Son, the sober writers of the ancient church did constantly affirm that it was firmly to be believed, but as unto the manner of it not to be inquired into. 'Scrutator majestatis absorbetur a gloria,' was their

rule. And the curious disputes of Alexander and Arius about it, gave occasion unto that many-headed monster of the Arian heresy which afterward ensued. For when once men of subtle heads, and unsanctified hearts, gave up themselves to inquire into things infinitely above their understanding and capacity, being vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds, they fell into endless divisions among themselves, agreeing only in an opposition unto the truth. But those who contented themselves to be wise unto sobriety, repressed this impious boldness. To this purpose speaks Lactantius, lib. 4. De vera Sapient. 'Quomodo igitur procreavit? Nec sciri a quoquam possunt, nec narrari opera divina; sed tamen sacræ literæ docent illum Dei filium, Dei esse sermonem.' 'How therefore did the Father beget the Son? These divine works can be known of none, declared by none; but the holy writings teach wherein it is determined, that he is the Son of God, that he is the Word of God.' And Ambrose, De fide ad Gratianum. 'Quæro abs te, quando aut quomodo putes filium esse generaturum? mihi enim impossibile est scire generationis secretum. Mens deficit, vox silet, non mea tantum, sed et angelorum; supra potestates, supra angelos, supra cherubim, supra sensum, supra omnem sensum.—Tu quoque manum ori admove; scrutari non licet superna mysteria. Licet scire quod natus sit, non licet discutere quomodo natus sit; illud negare mihi non licet, hoc quærere metus est. Nam si Paulus ea quæ audivit, raptus in tertium cœlum, ineffabilia dicit, quomodo nos exprimere possumus paternæ generationis arcanum, quod nec sentire potuimus nec audire? Quid te ista questionum tormenta delectant?'

'I inquire of you when and how the Son was begotten? Impossible it is to me to know the mystery of this generation. My mind faileth, my voice is silent,

and not only mine, but of the angels; it is above principalities, above angels, above the cherubims, above the seraphims, above all understanding. Lay thy hand on thy mouth; it is not lawful to search into these heavenly mysteries. It is lawful to know that he was born; that it is not lawful for me to deny; this I am afraid to inquire into. For if Paul, when he was taken into the third heaven, affirms that the things which he heard could not be uttered; how can we express the mystery of the divine generation, which we can neither apprehend nor hear? Why do such tormenting questions delight thee?'

Ephraim Syrus wrote a book to this purpose, against them who would search out the nature of the Son of God. Among many other things to the same purpose are his words, cap. 2. 'Infelix profecto, miser, atque impudentissimus est, qui scrutari cupit opificem suum. Millia millium, et centies millies millena millia angelorum et archangelorum, cum horrore glorificant, et trementes adorant; et homines lutei, pleni peccatis, de divinitate intrepide disserunt? Non illorum exhorrescit corpus, non contremescit animus; sed securi et garruli, de Christo Dei filio, qui pro me indigno peccatore passus est, deque ipsius utraque generatione loquuntur; nec saltem quod in luce cæcutiunt, sentiunt.' 'He is unhappy, miserable, and most impudent, who desires to examine or search out his Maker. Thousands of thousands, and hundreds of thousands of millions of angels and archangels, do glorify him with dread, and adore him with trembling; and shall dirty men full of sins, dispute of the Deity without fear? Horror doth not shake their bodies, their minds do not tremble, but being secure and prating, they speak of the Son of God, who suffered for me unworthy sinner, and of both his nativities or generations; at least they are not sensible how blind they are in the light.' To

the same purpose speaks Eusebius at large, Demon. Evan. lib. 5. cap. 2.

Leo well adds hereunto the consideration of his incarnation, in those excellent words, Serm. 9. De Nativitat. 'Quia in Christo Jesu filio Dei, non solum ad divinam essentiam, sed etiam ad humanam spectat naturam, quod dictum est per prophetam; generationem ejus quis enarrabit? Utramque enim substantiam in unam convenisse personam, nisi fides credat, sermo non explicat; et ideo materia nunquam deficit laudis; quia nunquam sufficit copia laudatoris. Gaudiamus igitur quod ad eloquendum tantum misericordiæ sacramentum impares sumus; et cum salutis nostræ altitudinem promere non valeamus, sentiamus nobis bonum esse quod vincimur. Nemo enim ad cognitionem veritatis magis propinquat, quam qui intelligit, in rebus divinis, etiamsi multum proficiat, semper sibi superesse quod quærat.' See also Fulg. lib. 2. ad Thrasimund.

But I speak of the person of Christ as unto the assumption of the substantial adjunct of the human nature, not to be a part, whereof his person is composed, but as unto its subsistence therein by virtue of a substantial union. Some of the ancients, I confess, speak freely of the composition of the person of Christ in and by the two natures, the divine and human. That the Son of God after his incarnation had one nature, composed of the Deity and humanity, was the heresy of Apolinarius, Eutyches, the Monothelites, or Monophysites condemned by all. But that his most simple divine nature, and the human, composed properly of soul and body, did compose his one person, or that it was composed of them, they constantly affirmed: Τὸν Θεοῦ μεσίτην καὶ ἀνθρώπων, κατὰ τας γραφᾶς συγκεῖσθαι φάμεν ἐκ τε τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀνθρωπότητος τελείως ἐχούσας κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον λόγον, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πεφηνότος, ἐκ Θεοῦ κατὰ φύσιν υἱοῦ, saith Cyril of Alexandria. 'A sanctis patribus aduna-

tione ex divinitate et humanitate Christus Dominus noster compositus prædicatur.' Pet. Diacon. lib. de Incarnat. et Grat. Christi, ad Fulgentium. And the union which they intended by this composition they called ἕνωσιν φυσικὴν, because it was of divers natures, and ἕνωσιν κατὰ σύνθεσιν, a union by composition. . . .

But because there neither was, nor can be any composition, properly so called, of the divine and human natures, and that the Son of God was a perfect person before his incarnation, wherein he remained what he was, and was made what he was not, the expression hath been forsaken and avoided; the union being better expressed by the assumption of a substantial adjunct, or the human nature into personal subsistence with the Son of God, as shall be afterward explained. This they constantly admire as the most ineffable effect of divine wisdom and grace: Ὁ ἄσαρκος σαρκοῦται, ὁ λόγος ταχύνεται, ὁ ἀόρατος ὁρᾶται, ὁ ἀναφὴς ψηλαφᾶται, ὁ ἄχρονος ἄρχεται, ὁ υἱὸς Θεοῦ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου γίνεται, saith Gregory Nazianzen, Orat. 12. in admiration of this mystery. Hereby God communicates all things unto us from his own glorious fulness, the near approaches whereof we are not able to bear. So is it illustrated by Eusebius, Demonst. Evang. lib. 4. cap. 5, &c. Οὕτω δὲ φωτὸς ἡλίου, μία καὶ αὐτὴ προσβολὴ ὁμοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ καταγάζει μὲν ἄστρα, φωτείζει δὲ ὀφθαλμοὺς, ἀφὴν δὲ θερμαίνει, τιαίνει δὲ γῆν, αὔξει δὲ φυτὰ, κ. λ. ---εἰ γοῦν ὥς ἐν ὑποθέσει λόγου, καθεὶς οὐρανόθεν αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν παμφυὴς ἥλιος σὺν ἀνθρώποις ἐπὶ γῆς πολιτευοίτο, οὐδένα τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς μείνας ἂν ἀδιάφορον πάντων συλλήβην ἐμψύχων ὁμοῦ, καὶ ἀψύχων ἀθρώατᾶ τοῦ φωτὸς προσβολὴ διαφθαρησομένων. The sense of which words, with some that follow in the same place, is unto this purpose: By the beams of the sun, light, and life, and heat, unto the procreation, sustenation, refreshment, and cherishing of all things are communicated. But if the sun itself should come down unto the earth, no-

thing could bear its heat and lustre; our eyes would not be enlightened, but darkened by its glory, and all things be swallowed up and consumed by its greatness; whereas, through the beams of it, every thing is enlightened and kindly refreshed. So is it with this eternal beam or brightness of the Father's glory. We cannot bear the immediate approach of the Divine Being, but through him as incarnate are all things communicated unto us, in a way suited unto our reception and comprehension.

So it is admired by Leo, Serm. 3. de Nativit. 'Natura humana in Creatoris societatem assumpta est, non ut ille habitator, et ille esset habitaculum; sed ut naturæ alteræ sic misceretur altera, ut quamvis alia sit quæ suscipitur, alia vero quæ suscepit, in tantam tamen unitatem conveniret utriusque diversitas, et unus idemque sit filius, qui se, et secundum quod verus est homo, Patre dicit minorem, et secundum quod verus est Deus Patri se profitetur æqualem.' 'Human nature is assumed into the society of the Creator, not that he should be the inhabitant, and that the habitation' (that is, by an inhabitation in the effects of his power and grace, for otherwise the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily); 'but that one nature should be so mingled' (that is, conjoined) 'with the other, that although that be of one kind which assumeth, and that of another which is assumed; yet the diversity of them both should concur in such a unity or union, as that it is one and the same Son, who as he was a true man, said that he was less than the Father, or the Father was greater than he; so as he was true God, professeth himself equal unto the Father.' See also August. De fide, ad Pet. Diacon. cap. 17. Justitianus Imperator Epist. ad Hormisdam, Romæ Episcop.

And the mystery is well expressed by Maxentius, Biblioth. Patr. par. prima. 'Non confundimus natu-

rarum diversitatem; veruntamen Christum non ut tu asseris Deum factum, sed Deum factum Christum confitemur. Quia non cum pauper esset, dives factus est, sed cum dives esset, pauper factus est, ut nos divites faceret; neque enim cum esset in forma servi, formam Dei accepit; sed cum esset in forma Dei, formam servi accepit; similiter etiam nec, cum esset caro, verbum est factum; sed cum esset verbum, caro factum est.' 'We do not confound the diversity of the natures, howbeit we believe not what you affirm, that Christ was made God, but we believe that God was made Christ. For he was not made rich when he was poor; but being rich, he was made poor, that he might make us rich. He did not take the form of God, when he was in the form of a servant; but being in the form of God, he took on him the form of a servant. In the like manner, he was not made the Word when he was flesh; but being the Word, he was made flesh.'

And Jerome, speaking of the effects of this mystery, Comment. in Ezekiel, cap. 46. 'Ne miretur lector si idem et Principes est et Sacerdos, et Vitulus, et Aries, et Agnus; cum in Scripturis sanctis pro varietate causarum legamus eum Dominum, et Deum, et Hominem, et Prophetam, et Virgam, et Radicem, et Florem, et Principem, et Regem justum, et Justitiam, Apostolum, et Episcopum, Brachium, Servum, Angelum, Pastorem, Filium, et Unigenitum, et Primogenitum, Ostium, Viam, Sagittam, Sapientiam, et multa alia.' 'Let not the reader wonder if he find one and the same to be the Prince and Priest, the Bullock, Ram, and Lamb; for in the Scripture on variety of causes, we find him called Lord, God, and Man, the Prophet, a Rod, and the Root, the Flower, Prince, Judge, and righteous King; Righteousness, the Apostle and Bishop, the Arm and Servant of God, the Angel, the Shepherd, the Son, the Only-begotten, the First-begotten, the Door, the Way,

the Arrow, Wisdom, and sundry other things.' And Ennodius hath as it were turned this passage of Jerome into verse.

Corda domat, qui cuncta videt, quem cuncta tremiscunt;
Fons, via, dextra, lapis, vitulus, leo, lucifer, agnus;
Janua, spes, virtus, verbum, sapientia, vates.
Ostia, virgultum, pastor, mons, rete, columba,
Flamma, gigas, aquila, sponsus, patientia, nervus,
Filius, excelsus, Dominus, Deus; omnia Christus.
In natalem Papæ Epiphanii.

'Quod homo est, esse Christus voluit; ut et homo possit esse quod Christus est,' saith Cyprian. De Vanitat. Judæ. And, 'quod est Christus erimus Christiani, si Christum fuerimus secuti,' ibid. And he explains his mind in this expression by way of admiration, Serm. de Eleemosyn. 'Christus hominis filius esse voluit, ut nos filios Dei faceret; humiliavit se, ut populum qui prius jacebat, erigeret; vulneratus est, ut vulnera nostra sanaret.'

Chap. iv. That he was the foundation of all the holy counsels of God, with respect unto the vocation, sanctification, justification, and eternal salvation of the church, is in the next place at large declared. And he was so on a threefold account. 1. Of the ineffable mutual delight of the Father and the Son in those counsels from all eternity. 2. As the only way and means of the accomplishment of all those counsels, and the communication of their effects unto the eternal glory of God. 3. As he was in his own person as incarnate, the idea and exemplar in the mind of God of all that grace and glory in the church, which was designed unto it in those eternal counsels. As the cause of all good unto us, he is on this account acknowledged by the ancients.

Οὗτος γοῦν ὁ λόγος, ὁ Χριστος καὶ τοῦ εἶναι πάλαι ἡμᾶς, ἦν γὰρ ἐν Θεῷ, καὶ τοῦ εὖ εἶναι. Νῦν δὲ ἐπιφάνη ἀνθρώποις, αὐτὸς οὗτος ὁ λόγος, ὁ μόνος ἄμφω Θεὸς τε καὶ ἄνθρωπος,

ἁπάντων ἡμῖν αἴτιος ἀγαθων, saith Clemens, Adhort. ad Gentes. 'He therefore is the Word, the cause of old of our being, for he was in God, and the cause of our well-being. But now he hath appeared unto men, the same eternal Word, who alone is both God and man, and unto us the cause of all that is good.' As he was in God the cause of our being and well-being from eternity; he was the foundation of the divine counsels in the way explained; and in his incarnation, the execution of them all was committed unto him, that through him all actual good, all the fruits of those counsels might be communicated unto us.

Chap. v. He is also declared in the next place, as he is the image and great representative of God, even the Father, unto the church. On what various accounts he is so called, is fully declared in the discourse itself. In his divine person, as he was the only-begotten of the Father from eternity, he is the essential image of the Father, by the generation of his person, and the communication of the divine nature unto him therein. As he is incarnate, he is both in his own entire person God and man, and in the administration of his office, the image or representative of the nature and will of God unto us, as is fully proved. So speaks Clem. Alexandrin. Admonit. ad Gentes; Ἡ μεν γὰρ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰκὼν ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ, καὶ υἱὸς τοῦ νοῦ γνήσιος, ὁ θεῖος λόγος, φωτὸς ἀρχέτυπον φῶς, εἰκὼν δὲ τοῦ λόγου ὁ ἀνθρώπος. 'The image of God is his own word, the natural Son of the' (eternal) 'mind, the divine Word, the original Light of light; and the image of the Word is man.' And the same author again, Pædagog. Πρόσωπον τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ λόγος, ᾧ φωτίζεται ὁ Θεὸς καὶ γνωρίζεται. 'The Word is the face, the countenance, the representation of God, in whom he is brought to light and made known.' As he is in his divine person his eternal, essential image; so in his incarnation, as the teacher of men, he is the representa-

tive image of God unto the church, as is afterward declared.

So also Jerome expresseth his mind herein, Comment. in Psal. lxvi. 'Illuminet vultum suum super nos; Dei facies quæ est? utique imago ejus. Dicit enim apostolus imaginem Patris esse filium; ergo imaginē sua nos illuminet; hoc est, imaginem suam filium illuminet super nos; ut ipse nos illuminet; lux enim Patris lux filii est.' 'Let him cause his face to shine upon us; or lift up the light of his countenance upon us. What is the face of God, even his image? For the apostle says, that the Son is the image of the Father. Wherefore let him shine on us with his image; that is, cause his Son, which is his image, to shine upon us, that he may illuminate us; for the light of the Father and of the Son are the same.' Christ being the image of God, the face of God, in him is God represented unto us, and through him are all saving benefits communicated unto them that believe.

Eusebius also speaks often unto this purpose; as Demon. Evangel. lib. 4. cap. 2. Ὅθεν εἰκότως οἱ χρησμοὶ θεολογοῦντες, θεὸν γέννητον αὐτὸν ἀποφαίνουσιν, ὡς ἂν τῆς ἀνεκφράστου, καὶ ἀπερινοήτου θεότητος μόνον ἐν αὑτῷ φέροντα τὴν εἰκόνα, δι' ἣν καὶ θεὸν εἶναι τε αὐτὸν καὶ λέγεσθαι τῆς πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἐξομοιώσεως χάριν. 'Wherefore the holy oracles speaking theologically, or teaching divine things, do rightly call him God begotten' (of the Father), 'as he who alone bears in himself the image of the ineffable and inconceivable Deity. Wherefore he both is, and is called God, because of his being the character, similitude, or image of him who is the first.' The divine personality of Christ consists in this, that the whole divine nature being communicated unto him by eternal generation, he is the image of God, even the Father, by whom he is represented unto us. See the same book,

chap. 7. to the same purpose. Also De Ecclesiast. Theol. contra Marcell. lib. 2. cap. 17.

Clemens abounds much in the affirmation of this truth concerning the person of Christ, and we may yet add from a multitude to the same purpose, one or more testimonies from him. Treating of Christ, as the teacher of all men (his παιδαγωγὸς) he affirms that he is, Θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώπου σχήματι, 'God in the figure or form of man;' ἄχραντος πατρικῷ θελήματι διάκονος, λόγος, Θεὸς, ὁ ἐν πατρὶ, ὁ ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ πατρὸς, σὺν καὶ τῷ σχήματι Θεὸς; 'impolluted, serving the will of the Father, the Word, God, who is in the Father, on the right hand of the Father, and in or with the form of God.' Οὗτος ἡμῖν εἰκὼν ἡ ἀκαλίδωτος, τοῦτο πάντι σθένει πειρατέον ἐξομοιοῦν τὴν ψυχήν. 'He is the image (of God) unto us, wherein there is no blemish, and with all our strength are we to endeavour to render ourselves like unto him.' This is the great end of his being the representative image of God unto us. And Stromat. lib. 4. Ὁ μὲν οὖν Θεὸς ἀναπόδεικτος ὤν, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστημονικός. Ὁ δὲ υἱὸς σοφία τε ἐστὶ καὶ ἐπιστήμη, καὶ ἀλήθεια, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τούτῳ συγγενῆ. 'As God' (absolutely) 'falls not under demonstration' (that is, cannot perfectly be declared), 'so he doth not' (immediately) 'effect, or teach us knowledge. But the Son is wisdom, and knowledge, and truth, unto us, and every thing which is cognate hereunto.' For in and by him doth God teach us, and represent himself unto us.

Chap. vii. Upon the glory of this divine person of Christ depends the efficacy of all his offices; an especial demonstration whereof is given in his prophetical office. So is it well expressed by Irenæus: 'qui nil molitur inepte,' lib. 1. cap. 1. 'Non enim aliter nos discere poteramus quæ sunt Dei, nisi magister noster verbum existens, homo factus fuisset. Neque enim alius poterat enarrare nobis quæ sunt Patris, nisi proprium

ipsius verbum. Quis enim alius cognovit sensum Domini? aut quis alius ejus consiliarius factus est? Neque rursus nos aliter discere poteramus, nisi Magistrum nostrum videntes, et per auditum nostrum vocem ejus percipientes, uti imitatores quidem operum, factores autem sermonum ejus facti, communionem habeamus cum ipso.' 'We could not otherwise have learned the things of God, unless our Master being and continuing the' (eternal) 'Word, had been made man. For no other could declare unto us the things of God, but his own proper Word. For who else hath known the mind of the Lord? or who else hath been his counsellor? Neither on the other side could we otherwise have learned, unless we had seen our Master, and heard his voice' (in his incarnation and ministry), 'whereby following his works, and yielding obedience unto his doctrine, we may have communion with himself.'

I do perceive that if I should proceed with the same kind of attestations unto the doctrine of all the chapters in the ensuing discourse, this preface would be drawn forth unto a greater length than was ever designed unto it, or is convenient for it. I shall therefore choose out one or two instances more, to give a specimen of the concurrence of the ancient church in the doctrine declared in them, and so put a close unto it.

Chap. ix. In the ninth chapter, and those following, we treat of the divine honour that is due unto the person of Christ, expressed in adoration, invocation, and obedience proceeding from faith and love. And the foundation of the whole, is laid in the discovery of the true nature and causes of that honour: and three things are designed unto confirmation herein. 1. That the divine nature, which is individually the same in each person of the holy Trinity, is the proper formal object of all divine worship, in adoration and invocation;

wherefore, no one person is or can be worshipped, but in the same individual act of worship, each person is equally worshipped and adored. 2. That it is lawful to direct divine honour, worship, and invocation unto any person, in the use of his peculiar name, the Father, Son, or Spirit; or unto them altogether: but to make any request unto one person, and immediately the same unto another, is not exemplified in the Scripture, nor among the ancient writers of the church. 3. That the person of Christ as God-man, is the proper object of all divine honour and worship, on the account of his divine nature; and all that he did in his human nature, are motives thereunto.

The first of these is the constant doctrine of the whole ancient church, namely, that whether (for instance) in our solemn prayers and invocations, we call expressly on the name of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit; whether we do it absolutely or relatively, that is, with respect unto the relation of one person to the other; as calling on God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; on Christ as the Son of his love; on the Holy Spirit as proceeding from them both; we do formally invocate and call on the divine nature, and consequently the whole Trinity, and each person therein. This truth they principally confirmed with the form of our initiation into Christ at baptism; 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' For as there is contained therein the sum of all divine honour, so it is directed unto the same name, not the names of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which is the same Deity or divine nature alone.

So speak the fathers of the second general council in their letters unto the bishops of the west; as they are expressed in Theodoret, lib. 5. cap. 9. This form of baptism teacheth us, Πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ

τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, δηλαδὴ, θεότητός τε καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ οὐσίας μιᾶς τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος πεπιστευομένης, ὁμοτίμου τῆς ἀξίας, καὶ συνηδίου τῆς βασιλείας, ἐν τρισὶ τελείαις ὑποστάσεσι. 'To believe in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; seeing that the Deity, substance, and power of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is one and the same; their dignity equal, their kingdom co-eternal, in three perfect persons.' 'In nomine dixit, non nominibus, ergo non aliud nomen Patris est,' &c. quia unus Deus, Ambros. De Spirit. Sanct. lib. 1. cap. 14. Ὄνομα δὲ καινὸν τῶν τριῶν ἕν, ἡ θεότης. 'The one name common to three is the Deity.' Gregor. Nazianzen. Orat. 40. Hence Austin gives it as a rule in speaking of the Holy Trinity; 'Quando unus trium in aliquo opere nominatur, universa operari trinitas intelligitur.' Enchirid. cap. 38. 'When one person of the three is named in any work, the whole Trinity is to be understood to effect it.' There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, according to the Scriptures. Wherefore, as there is one faith in Christ, and one baptism of truth, although we are baptized, and believe in the Father, Son, and Spirit, κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν, οἶμαι, τρόπον καὶ λόγον, μία προσκύνησις, ἡ πατρὸς, καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντος υἱοῦ, καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος. 'So plainly in my judgment there is one and the same adoration of the Father, the Son incarnate, and the Holy Spirit.' Cyril. Alex. de Recta Fide, cap. 32.

And this they professed themselves to hold and believe in that ancient doxology which was first invented to decry the Arian heresy: 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.' The same glory in every individual act of its assignation or ascription, is directed unto each person jointly and distinctly; on the account of the same divine nature in each of them. I need not produce any testimonies in the

farther confirmation hereof: for in all their writings against the Arians they expressly and constantly contend that the holy Trinity, that is, the divine nature in three persons, is the individual object of all divine adoration, invocation, and all religious worship; and that by whatever personal name, as the Father, Son, or Spirit, we call on God, it is God absolutely who is adored, and each person participant of the same nature. See August. Lib. con. Serm. Arian. cap. 35. and Epist. 66. ad Maximum.

For the second thing, or the invocation of God by any personal name, or by the conjunction of the distinct names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together, nothing occurs more frequently among them. Yea, it is common to find in their writings, prayers begun unto one person, and ended in the name of another; yea, begun unto Christ, and closed in the name of his only-begotten Son: it being one and the same divine nature that is called on. Yea, the schoolmen do generally deny that the persons of the holy Trinity, under the consideration of the formal reason which is constitutive of their personality, are the formal object and term of divine worship; but in the worship of one, they are all worshipped as one God over all blessed for ever. See Aquin. 22. q. 81. a. 3. ad prima, and q. 84. a. 1. ad tertium. Alexand. Alens. p. 3. q. 30. m. 1. a. 3.

But yet, although we may call on God in and by the name of any divine person, or enumerate at once each person, (ὦ τριὰς ἁγία ἀριθμουμένη, τριὰς ἐν ἑνὶ ὀνόματι ἀριθμουμένη, Epiphan. Ancorat. 8. 22.) it doth not follow that we may make a request in our prayers unto one person, and then immediately repeat it unto another: for it would thence follow, that the person unto whom we make that request in the second place, was not invocated, not called on, not equally adored with him,

who was so called on in the first place, although the divine nature is the object of all religious invocation, which is the same in each person. Wherefore, in our divine invocation, we may name and fix our thoughts distinctly on any person according as our souls are affected with the distinct operations of each person in grace towards us.

For what concerns, in the third place, the ascription of divine honour in adoration and invocation unto the person of Christ; it is that which they principally contended for, and argued from, in all their writings against the Arians.

Evidences of infinite wisdom in the constitution of the person of Christ, and rational discoveries of the condecencies therein unto the exaltation of all the other glorious properties of the divine nature, are also treated of. Herein we consider the incarnation of the Son of God with respect unto the recovery and salvation of the church alone. Some have contended that he should have been incarnate, had man never fallen or sinned. Of them are Rupertus, lib. 3. De gloria et honore filii hominis. Albertus Magnus, in 3. distinct. 10. A. 4. Petrus Galatinus, lib. 3. cap. 4. as are Scotus, Halensis, and others, whom Osiander followed. The same is affirmed by Socinus concerning the birth of that man, which alone he fancied him to be, as I have elsewhere declared. But I have disproved this figment at large. Many of the ancients have laboured in this argument, of the necessity of the incarnation of the eternal Word, and the condecencies unto divine wisdom therein. See Irenæus, lib. 3. cap. 20, 21. Eusebius, Demonst. Evangel. lib. 4. cap. 1—4, &c. Cyril. Alexand. lib. 5. cap. 7. lib. 1. De fide ad Regin. Chrysostom, Homil. 10. in Johan. et in cap. 8. ad Rom. Serm. 18. Augustin, De Trinit. lib. 13. cap. 13—20. Leo, Epist. 13. 18. Sermo. de Nativit. 1. 4. 10. Basil.

in Psal. 48. Albinus, lib. 1. in Johan. cap. 11. Damascen. lib. 3. De fide, cap. 15. 19. Anselm, quod Deus Homo, lib. duo. Guil. Parisiensis, lib. Cur Deus Homo. Some especial testimonies we may produce in confirmation of what we have discoursed in the places directed unto. There is one of them, one of the most ancient, the most learned, and most holy of them, who hath so fully delivered his thoughts concerning this mystery, as that I shall principally make use of his testimony herein.

It belonged unto the wisdom and righteousness of God, that Satan should be conquered and subdued in and by the same nature which he had prevailed against, by his suggestion and temptation. To this purpose that holy writer speaks, lib. 3. cap. 20. which, because his words are cited by Theodoret, Dial. 2. I shall transcribe them from thence, as free from the injuries of his barbarous translator: Ἥνωσεν οὖν καθὼς προέφαμεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῷ Θεῷ, εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἄνθρωπος ἠνίκησιν τὸν ἀντίπαλον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οὐκ ἂν δικαίως ἐνικήθη ὁ ἐχθρὸς, πάλιν τε, εἰ μὴ ὁ Θεὸς ἐδωρήσατο τὴν σωτηρίαν, οὐκ ἂν βεβαίως ἔχομεν αὐτὴν, καὶ εἰ μὴ συνηνώθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ Θεῷ οὐκ ἂν ἠδυνήθη μετασχεῖν τῆς ἀφθαρσίας. Ἔδει γὰρ τὸν μεσίτην τοῦ Θεοῦ τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων, διὰ τῆς ἰδίας πρὸς ἑκατέρους οἰκειότητος εἰς φιλίαν καὶ ὁμόνοιαν τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους συνηγαγεῖν. Words plainly divine, an illustrious testimony of the faith of the ancient church, and expressive of the principal mystery of the gospel. 'Wherefore, as we said before, he united man unto God. For if man had not overcome the adversary of men, the enemy had not been justly conquered; and, on the other hand, if God had not given and granted salvation, we could never have a firm undefeasible possession of it; and if man had not been united unto God, he could not have been partaker of immortality. It behoved, therefore, the Mediator between God and man, by his own participation of the

nature of each of them, to bring them both into friendship and agreement with each other.' And to the same purpose, speaking of the wisdom of God in our redemption by Christ, with respect unto the conquest of the devil, lib. 5. cap. 1. 'Potens in omnibus Dei Verbum, et non deficiens in sua justitia, juste etiam adversus ipsam conversus est apostasiam, ea quæ sunt sua redimens, ab eo, non cum vi, quemadmodum ille initio dominabitur nostri, ea quæ non erant sua insatiabiliter rapiens——Suo igitur sanguine redimente nos Domino, et dante animam suam pro anima nostra, et carnem suam pro carnibus nostris,' &c. Again divinely; 'The all-powerful Word of God no way defective in righteousness, set himself against the apostacy justly also; redeeming from him (Satan, the head of the apostacy) the things which were his own—not with force, as he bare rule over us, insatiably making rapine of what was not his own—but he, the Lord, redeeming us with his own blood, giving his soul for our soul, and his flesh for ours, wrought out our deliverance.' These things are at large insisted on in the ensuing discourse.

It belongs unto this great mystery, and is a fruit of divine wisdom, that our deliverance should be wrought in and by the same nature, wherein and whereby we were ruined. The reasons hereof, and the glory of God therein, are at large discoursed in the ensuing treatise. To the same purpose speaks the same holy writer, lib. 5. cap. 14. 'Non in semetipso recapitulasset hæc Dominus, nisi ipse caro et sanguis secundum principalem plasmationem factus fuisset; salvans in semetipso in fine, illud quod perierat in principio in Adam. Si autem ob alteram quandam dispositionem Dominus incarnatus est, et ex altera substantia carnem attulit, non ergo in semetipso recapitulatus est hominem, adhuc etiam nec caro dici potest——habuit ergo et ipse car-

nem et sanguinem, non alteram quandam, sed ipsam principalem Patris plasmationem in se recapitulans, exquirens id quod perierat.' And to the same purpose, lib. 5. cap. 1. 'Neque enim vere esset sanguinem et carnem habens, per quam nos redemit, nisi antiquam plasmationem Adæ in seipsum recapitulasset.' That which these passages give testimony unto, is what we have discoursed concerning the necessity of our redemption in and by the nature that sinned; and yet withal, that it should be free from all that contagion which invaded our nature by the fall. And these things are divinely expressed. 'Our Lord,' saith he, 'had not gathered up these things in himself, had not he been made flesh and blood, according unto its original creation.' (The reader may observe, that none of the ancient writers do so frequently express the fall of Adam, by our apostacy from God, and our recovery by a recapitulation in Christ, as Irenæus. His recapitulation being nothing but the ἀνακεφαλαίωσις mentioned by the apostle, Eph. i. 10. and he here affirms, that, unto this end, the Lord was made flesh; 'secundum principalem plasmationem,' as his words are rendered; that is plainly, the original creation of our nature in innocency, uprightness, purity, and righteousness.) 'So he saved in himself in the end, what perished in Adam at the beginning.' (The same nature, in and by the same nature.) 'For if the Lord had been incarnate, for any other disposition' (that is, cause, reason, or end), 'and had brought flesh from any other substance' (that is, celestial or etherial, as the Gnostics imagined), 'he had not recovered men, brought our nature unto a head in himself, nor could he have been said to be flesh. He therefore himself had flesh and blood, not of any other kind; but he took to himself that which was originally created of the Father, seeking that which was lost.' The same is observed by

Austin, lib. de fide, ad Petrum Diaconum. 'Sic igitur Christum Dei Filium, id est, unam ex Trinitate personam, Deum verum crede, ut divinitatem ejus de natura Patris natam esse non dubites; et sic eum verum hominem crede, et ejus carnem, non cœlestis, non aeriæ, non alterius cujusquam putes esse naturæ, sed ejus cujus est omnium caro; id est, quam ipse Deus, homini primo de terra plasmavit, et cæteris hominibus plasmat.' 'So believe Christ the Son of God, that is, one person of the Trinity, to be the true God, that you doubt not but that his divinity was born' (by eternal generation) 'of the nature of the Father; and so believe him to be a true man, that you suppose not his flesh to be aerial, or heavenly, or of any other nature, but of that which is the flesh of men; that is, which God himself formed in the first man of the earth, and which he forms in all other men.' That which he speaks of one person of the Trinity, hath respect unto the heretical opinion of Hormisda, the bishop of Rome, who contended that it was unlawful to say, that one person of the Trinity was incarnate, and persecuted some Scythian monks, men not unlearned about it, who were strenuously defended by Maxentius, one of them.

It carrieth in it a great condecency unto divine wisdom, that man should be restored unto the image of God, by him who was the essential image of the Father, as is declared in our discourse; and that he was made like unto us, that we might be made like unto him, and unto God through him. So speaks the same Irenæus, lib. 5. Præfat. 'Verbum Dei Jesus Christus, qui propter immensam suam dilectionem, factus est quod sumus nos, ut nos perficeret quod est ipse.' 'Jesus Christ the Word of God, who from his own infinite love was made what we are, that he might make us what he is;' that is, by the restoration of the image of God in us. And again, lib. 3. cap. 20. 'Fi-

lius Dei existens apud Patrem, et homo factus, longam hominum expositionem in seipso recapitulavit; in compendio nobis salutem præstans, ut quod perdideramus in Adam, id est, secundum imaginem et similitudinem esse Dei, hoc in Christo Jesu reciperemus, quia enim non erat possibile qui semel victus fuerat et elisus per inobedientiam, replasmare et obtinere brabium victoriæ; iterum autem impossibile erat ut salutem perciperet, qui sub peccato ceciderat, utraque operatus est filius Verbum Dei existens, a Patre descendens et incarnatus, usque ad mortem descendens, et dispensationem consummans salutis nostræ.' 'Being the Son of God with the Father, and being made man, he reconciled or gathered up in himself the long continued exposing of men' (unto sin and judgment), 'bringing in salvation in this compendious way, in this summary of it, that what we had lost in Adam, that is, our being in the image and likeness of God, that we should recover in Christ. For it was not possible that man that had been once conquered, and broken by disobedience, should by himself be reformed, and obtain the crown of victory; nor was it again possible, that he should recover salvation who had fallen under sin. Both were wrought by the Son, the Word of God, who descending from the Father, and being incarnate, submitted himself to death, perfecting the dispensation of our salvation.'

And Clemens Alexandrinus to the same purpose; Adhort. ad Gentes. Ναί φήμι ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος γενομένος, ἵνα δὲ καὶ σὺ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου μάθῃς, πῆ ποτε ἄρα ἄνθρωπος γένηται Θεός. 'The Word of God was made man, that thou mightest learn of a man, how man may become' (as) 'God.' And Ambrose, in Psal. cxviii. Octon. 8. 'Imago, id est, Verbum Dei, ad eum qui est ad imaginem hoc est, hominem venit, et quærit imago eum qui est ad similitudinem, ut iterum signet, ut iterum confirmet, quia amisit quod accepit.' 'The

image of God, that is, the Word of God, came into him who was after the image of God, that is man. And this image of God seeks him who was after the image of God, that he might seal him with it again, and confirm him, because he had lost that which he had received.' And Austin in one instance gives a rational account why it was condecent unto divine wisdom, that the Son, and not the Father, or the Holy Spirit, should be incarnate; which we also inquire into; lib. de Definition. Orthodoxis, cap. 2. 'Non Pater carnem assumpsit, neque Spiritus Sanctus, sed Filius tantum; ut qui erat in divinitate Dei Patris Filius ipse fieret in homine, hominis Matris Filius; ne Filii nomen ad alterum transiret, qui non esset æterna nativitate filius.' 'The Father did not assume flesh, nor the Holy Spirit, but the Son only; that he who in the Deity was the Son of the Father, should be made the Son of man, in his mother of human race; that the name of the Son should not pass unto any other, who was not the Son by an eternal nativity.'

I shall close with one meditation of the same author, concerning the wisdom and righteousness of God in this mystery. Enchirid. ad Laurent. cap. 99. 'Vide —universum genus humanum tam justo judicio Divino in apostatica radice damnatum, ut etiam si nullus inde liberaretur, nemo recte possit Dei vituperare justitiam; et qui liberantur, sic oportuisse liberari, ut ex pluribus non liberatis, atque damnatione justissima derelictis, ostenderetur, quod meruisset universa conspersio, et quo etiam istos debitum judicium Dei duceret, nisi ejus indebita misericordia subveniret.' 'Behold, the whole race of mankind by the just judgment of God so condemned in the apostatical root, that if no one were thence delivered, yet no man could rightly complain of the justice of God; and that those who are freed, ought so to be freed, that from the greater number

who are not freed, but left under most righteous condemnation, it might be manifest what the whole mass had deserved, and whither the judgment of God due unto them would lead them, if his mercy, which was not due, did not relieve them.' The reader may see what is discoursed unto these purposes: and because the great end of the description given of the person of Christ, is that we may love him, and thereby be transformed into his image, I shall close this preface with the words of Jerome, concerning that divine love unto Christ which is at large declared. 'Sive legas,' saith he, 'sive scribas, sive vigiles, sive dormias, amor tibi semper buccina in auribus sonet, hic lituus excitet animam tuam, hoc amore furebundus; quære in lecto tuo, quem desiderat anima tua.' Epist. ad Pammach. cap. 4. 'Whether thou readest or writest, whether thou watchest or sleepest, let the voice of love (to Christ) sound in thine ears; let this trumpet stir up thy soul; being overpowered (brought into an ecstasy), with this love, seek him on thy bed, whom thy soul desireth and longeth for.'

A

DECLARATION

OF THE

GLORIOUS MYSTERY

OF

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

Peter's confession; Matt. xvi. 16. *Conceits of the Papists thereon. The substance and excellency of that confession.*

Our blessed Saviour inquiring of his disciples their apprehensions concerning his person, and their faith in him, Simon Peter, as he was usually the forwardest on all such occasions, through his peculiar endowments of faith and zeal, returns an answer in the name of them all; Matt. xvi. 16. 'And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.'

Baronius, and sundry others of the Roman church, do affirm that the Lord Christ herein did prescribe the form of a general council. 'For here,' say they, 'the principal article of our Christian faith was declared and determined by Peter, whereunto all the rest of the apostles, as in duty they were obliged, did give their consent and suffrage.' This was done, as they suppose, that a rule and law might be given unto future ages, how to enact and determine articles of faith. For it is to be done by the successors of Peter presiding in councils, as it was now done by Peter in this assembly of Christ and his apostles.

But they seem to forget that Christ himself was now present, and therefore could have no vicar, seeing he presided in his own person. All the claim they lay unto the necessity of such a visible head of the church on the earth, as may

it is, is wrought in them by the power of God, revealing Christ unto their souls. Those who have more abilities of their own unto this end than Peter had, we are not concerned in.

2. He speaks unto the confession itself, acquainting his disciples with the nature and use of it, which from the beginning he principally designed; ver. 18. 'And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

From the speaking of these words unto Peter, there is a controversy raised in the world, whether the Lord Christ himself, or the pope of Rome, be the rock whereon the church is built. And unto that state are things come in religion among them that are called Christians, that the greatest number are for the pope, and against Christ in this matter. And they have good reason for their choice. For if Christ be the rock whereon the church is built, whereas he is a living stone, those that are laid and built on him must be lively stones also, as this apostle assures us, 1 Epist. ii. 4, 5. they must be like unto Christ himself, partaking of his nature, quickened by his Spirit, so as it were 'to be bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh;' Eph. v. 10. Nor can any be built on him, but by a living faith, effectual in universal obedience. These things the generality of men like not at all: and therefore, the fabric of the living temple on this foundation is usually but small, seldom conspicuous or outwardly glorious. But if the pope be this rock, all the Papists in the world, or all that have a mind so to be, be they never so wicked and ungodly, may be built upon him, and be made partakers of all that deliverance from the powers of hell which that rock can afford them. And all this may be obtained at a very easy rate. For the acknowledgment of the pope's sovereign authority in the church, is all that is required thereunto. How they bring in the claim of their pope by Peter, his being at Rome, being bishop of Rome, dying at Rome, fixing his chair at Rome, devoting and transmitting all his right, title, power, and authority, every thing but his faith, holiness, and labour, in the ministry unto the pope, I shall not here inquire, I have done it elsewhere. Here is fixed the root of the tree, which is grown great, like that in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, until it is become a recep-

tacle for the beasts of the field and fowls of the air, sensual men and unclean spirits. I shall therefore briefly lay an axe unto the root of it, by evidencing that it is not the person of Peter who confessed Christ, but the person of Christ whom Peter confessed, that is the rock on whom the church is built.

1. The variation of the expressions proves undeniably that our Saviour intended we should not understand the person of Peter to be the rock. He takes occasion from his name to declare what he designed, but no more. 'And I say also unto thee, thou art Peter.' He had given him this name before, at his first calling; John i. 42. now he gives the reason of his so doing, namely, because of the illustrious confession that he should make of the rock of the church; as the name of God under the Old Testament, was called on persons, and things, and places, because of some especial relation unto him. Wherefore, the expression is varied on purpose to declare, that whatever be the signification of the name Peter, yet the person so called was not the rock intended. The words are σὺ εἶ πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ. Had he intended the person of Peter, he would have expressed it plainly, σὺ εἶ πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ σοὶ, 'Thou art a rock, and on thee will I build.' At least the gender had not been altered, but he would have said, ἐπὶ τοῦτο τῷ πέτρῳ, which would have given some colour to this imagination. The exception which they lay hereunto, from the use of Cephas in the Syriac, which was the name of Peter, and signifies a rock or a stone, lies not only against the authentic authority of the Greek original; but of their own translation of it, which reads the words, 'Tu es Petrus, et super hanc Petram.'

2. If the church was built on the person of Peter, then when he died the church must utterly fail. For no building can possibly abide when its foundation is removed and taken away. Wherefore they tell us they do not intend by the person of Peter, that singular and individual person alone to be this rock; but he and his successors the bishops of Rome are so. But this story of his successors at Rome is a shameful fable. If the pope of Rome be a true believer, he succeeds in common with all other believers into the privileges which belong unto this confession; if he be not, he

hath neither lot nor portion in this matter. But the pretence is utterly vain on another account also. The apostle, shewing the insufficiency of the Aaronical priesthood, wherein there was a succession of God's own appointment, affirms, that it could not bring the church unto a perfect state, because the 'high-priests died one after another, and so were many;' Heb. vii. 8. 23, 24. And thereon he shews that the church cannot be consummate or perfected, unless it rest wholly in and on him who lives for ever, and was made a priest after the power of an endless life. And if the Holy Ghost judged the state of the Jewish church to be weak and imperfect, because it rested on high-priests that died one after another, although their succession was expressly ordained of God himself; shall we suppose that the Lord Christ, who came to consummate the church, and to bring it unto the most perfect estate whereof in this world it is capable, should build it on a succession of dying men, concerning which succession there is not the least intimation that it is appointed of God? And as unto the matter of fact we know both what interruptions it hath received, and what monsters it hath produced, both sufficiently manifesting that it is not of God.

3. There is but one rock, but one foundation. There is no mention in the Scripture of two rocks of the church. In what others invent to this purpose we are not concerned. And the rock and the foundation are the same; for the rock is that whereon the church is built, that is the foundation. But that the Lord Christ is this single rock and foundation of the church, we shall prove immediately. Wherefore, neither Peter himself, nor his pretended successors, can be this rock. As for any other rock, it belongs not unto our religion: they that have framed it, may use it as they please. For they that make such things, are like unto the things they make. So is every one that trusteth in them; Psal. cxv. 8. 'But their rock is not like our rock, themselves being judges,' unless they will absolutely equal the pope unto Jesus Christ.

4. Immediately after this declaration of our Saviour's purpose to build his church on the rock, he reveals unto his disciples the way and manner how he would lay its foundation, namely, in his death and sufferings; ver. 21. And thereon this supposed rock, being a little left unto his own

stability, shewed himself to be but a 'reed shaken with the wind.' For he is so far from putting himself under the weight of the building, that he attempts an obstruction of its foundation. He began to rebuke Christ himself for mentioning his sufferings, wherein alone the foundation of the gospel church was to be laid; ver. 22. and hereon he received the severest rebuke that ever the Lord Jesus gave unto any of his disciples; ver. 23. And so it is known that afterward, through surprisal and temptation, he did what lay in him to recall that confession which here he made, and whereon the church was to be built. For that no flesh might glory in itself, he that was singular in this confession of Christ, was so also in the denial of him. And if he in his own person manifested how unmeet he was to be the foundation of the church, they must be strangely infatuated who can suppose his pretended successors so to be. But some men will rather have the church to be utterly without any foundation, than that it should not be the pope.

The vanity of this pretence being removed, the substance of the great mystery contained in the attestation given by our Saviour unto the confession of Peter, and the promise thereunto annexed, may be comprised in the ensuing assertions.

1. The person of Christ, the Son of the living God, as vested with his offices, whereunto he was called and anointed, is the foundation of the church, the rock whereon it is built.

2. The power and policy of hell will be always engaged in opposition unto the relation of the church unto this foundation, or the building of it on this rock.

3. The church that is built on this rock shall never be disjoined from it, or prevailed against by the opposition of the gates of hell.

The two former of these I shall speak briefly unto, my principal design being a demonstration of a truth that ariseth from the consideration of them all.

The foundation of the church is twofold. (1.) Real. (2.) Doctrinal. And in both ways Christ alone is the foundation. The real foundation of the church he is, by virtue of the mystical union of it unto him, with all the benefits whereof from thence, and thereby it is made partaker. For

thence alone hath it spiritual life, grace, mercy, perfection, and glory; Eph. iv. 15, 16. Col. ii. 19. And he is the doctrinal foundation of it, in that the faith or doctrine concerning him and his offices is that divine truth, which in a peculiar manner animates and constitutes the church of the New Testament; Eph. ii. 19—22. Without the faith and confession hereof, no one person belongs unto that church. I know not what is now believed, but I judge it will not yet be denied, that the external formal cause of the church of the New Testament, is the confession of the faith concerning the person, offices, and grace of Christ, with what is of us required thereon. In what sense we assert these things will be afterward fully cleared.

That the Lord Christ is thus the foundation of the church, is testified unto, Isa. xxviii. 16. 'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth, shall not make haste.' It is among the bold inroads, that in this late age have been made on the vitals of religion, that some, in compliance with the Jews, have attempted the application of this promise unto Hezekiah. The violence they have offered herein to the mind of the Holy Ghost, might be evidenced from every word of the context. But the interpretation and application of the last words of this promise by the apostles, leaves no pretence unto this insinuation. 'He that believes on him, shall not be ashamed or confounded;' Rom. ix. 33. x. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 6. that is, he shall be eternally saved; which it is the highest blasphemy to apply unto any other but Jesus Christ alone. He therefore is alone that foundation which God hath laid in and of the church; see Psal. cxviii. 22. Matt. xxi. 42. Mark xii. 10. Luke xx. 17. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 4. Eph. ii. 20—22. Zech. iii. 9. But this fundamental truth of Christ being the only foundation of the church, is so expressly determined by the apostle St. Paul, as not to need any farther confirmation; 1 Cor. iii. 11. 'For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

CHAP. II.

Opposition made unto the church as built on the person of Christ.

THERE are in the words of our Saviour unto Peter concerning the foundation of the church, a promise of its preservation, and a prediction of the opposition that should be made thereunto. And accordingly all things are come to pass, and carrying on towards a complete accomplishment. For (that we may begin with the opposition foretold) the power and policy of hell ever were, and ever will be, engaged in opposition unto the church built on this foundation; that is, the faith of it concerning his person, office, and grace, whereby it is built on him. This as unto what is past concerneth matter of fact; whereof therefore I must give a brief account; and then we shall examine what evidences we have of the same endeavour at present.

The gates of hell, as all agree, are the power and policy of it; or the actings of Satan both as a lion, and as a serpent, by rage and by subtlety. But whereas in these things he acts not visibly in his own person, but by his agents, he hath always had two sorts of them employed in his service. By the one he executes his rage, and by the other his craft; he animates the one as a lion, the other as a serpent: in the one he acts as the dragon, in the other as the beast that had two horns like the lamb, but spake like the dragon. The first is the unbelieving world, the other apostates and seducers of all sorts. Wherefore this work in this kind is of a double nature; the one an effect of his power and rage, acted by the world in persecution, the other of his policy and craft, acted by heretics in seduction. In both he designs to separate the church from its foundation.

The opposition of the first sort he began against the person of Christ immediately in his human nature. Fraud he first once attempted in his temptation, Matt. iv. but quickly found that that way he could make no approach unto him, 'The Prince of this world came, but had nothing in him.' Wherefore he betook himself unto open force, and by all means possible sought his destruction; so also the more at

any time the church is by faith and watchfulness secured against seduction, the more doth he rage against it in open persecution. And for the example and comfort of the church, in its conformity unto him, no means were left unattempted that might instigate and prepare the world for his ruin. Reproaches, contempt, scorn, false and lying accusations by his suggestions, were heaped on him on every hand. Hereby in the whole course of his ministry he 'endured the contradiction of sinners against himself;' Heb. xii. 3. And there is herein blessed provision made of inestimable consolation, for all those who are 'predestinated to be conformed unto his image,' when God shall help them by faith to make use of his example. He calls them to take up his cross and follow him; and he hath shewed them what is in it by his own bearing of it. Contempt, reproach, despiteful usage, calumnies, false accusations, wrestings of his words, blaspheming of his doctrine, reviling of his person, all that he said and did as to his principles about human government, and moral conversation, encompassed him all his days. And he hath assured his followers, that such and no other, at least for the most part, shall be their lot in this world. And some in all ages have an experience of it in an eminent manner. But have they any reason to complain? Why should the servant look for better measure than the Master met withal? To be made like unto him in the worst of evils, for his sake, is the best and most honourable condition in this world. God help some to believe it. Hereby was way made for his death. But in the whole it was manifested, how infinitely in all his subtlety and malice Satan falls short of the contrivances of divine wisdom and power. For all that he attained by effecting his death, in the hour of darkness, was but the breaking of his own head, the destruction of his works, with the ruin of his kingdom; and what yet remains to consummate his eternal misery, he shall himself work out in his opposition unto the church. His restless malice and darkness will not suffer him to give over the pursuit of his rage, until nothing remains to give him a full entrance into endless torments, which he hasteneth every day. For when he shall have filled up the measure of his sins, and of the sins of the world, in being instrumental unto [illegible] rage, eternal judgment shall put all things unto their

issue. Through that shall he, with the world, enter into everlasting flames, and the whole church built on the rock into rest and glory.

No sooner did the church of the New Testament begin to arise on this foundation, but the whole world of Jews and Gentiles, set themselves with open force to destroy it. And all that they contended with the church about was their faith, and confession of it, that 'Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.' This foundation they would cast it from, or exterminate it out of the earth. What were the endeavours of the gates of hell in this kind, with what height of rage, with what bloody and inhuman cruelties they were exercised and executed, we have some obscure remembrance in the stories that remain from the martyrdom of Stephen unto the days of Constantine. But although there be enough remaining on record, to give us a view of the insatiable malice of the old murderer, and an astonishing representation of human nature degenerating into his image in the perpetration of all horrid inhuman cruelties, yet is it all as nothing in comparison of that prospect which the last day will give of them, when the earth shall disclose all the blood that it hath received, and the righteous Judge shall lay open all the contrivances for its effusion, with the rage and malice wherewith they were attended. The same rage continueth yet unallayed in its principles. And although God in many places restrain and shut it up in his providence, by the circumstances of human affairs, yet as it hath the least advantage, as it finds any door open unto it, it endeavours to act itself in lesser or higher degrees. But whatever dismal appearance of things there may be in the world, we need not fear the ruin of the church by the most bloody oppositions. Former experiences will give security against future events. It is built on the rock, and those gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The second way whereby Satan attempted the same end, and yet continueth so to do, was by pernicious errors and heresies. For all the heresies wherewith the church was assaulted and pestered for some centuries of years, were oppositions unto their faith in the person of Christ. I shall briefly reflect on the heads of this opposition, because they are now, after a revolution of so many ages, lifting up them

selves again, though under new vizards and pretences. And they were of three sorts.

1. That which introduced other doctrines and notions of divine things, absolutely exclusive of the person and mediation of Christ. Such was that of the Gnostics, begun as it is supposed by Simon the magician. A sort of people they were with whom the first churches, after the decease of the apostles, were exceedingly pestered, and the faith of many was overthrown. For instead of Christ, and God in him reconciling the world unto himself, and the obedience of faith thereon according unto the gospel, they introduced endless fables, genealogies, and conjugations of deities, or divine powers, which practically issued in this, that Christ was such an emanation of light and knowledge in them, as made them perfect; that is, it took away all differences of good and evil, and gave them liberty to do what they pleased without sense of sin, or danger of punishment. This was the first way that Satan attempted the faith of the church, namely, by substituting a perfecting light and knowledge in the room of the person of Christ; and for aught I know, it may be one of the last ways whereby he will endeavour the accomplishment of the same design. Nor had I made mention of these pernicious imaginations, which have lain rotting in oblivion for so many generations, but that some again endeavour to revive them, at least so far as they were advanced and directed against the faith and knowledge of the person of Christ.

2. Satan attempted the same work by them who denied his divine nature, that is, in effect, denied him to be the Son of the living God, on the faith whereof the church is built. And these were of two sorts:

(1.) Such as plainly and openly denied him to have any pre-existence unto his conception and birth of the holy Virgin. Such were the Ebionites, Samosetanians, and Photinians. For they all affirmed him to be a mere man, and no more, though miraculously conceived and born of the Virgin, as some of them granted; though denied, as it is said, by the Ebionites, on which account he was called the Son of God. This attempt lay directly against the everlasting rock, and would have substituted sand in the room of it. For no better is the best of human nature to make a foundation

for the church, if not united unto the divine. Many in those days followed those pernicious ways; yet the foundation of God stood sure, nor was the church moved from it. But yet after a revolution of so many ages, is the same endeavour again engaged in. The old enemy, taking advantage of the prevalency of Atheism and profaneness among those that are called Christians, doth again employ the same engine to overthrow the faith of the church, and that with more subtlety than formerly, in the Socinians. For their faith, or rather unbelief, concerning the person of Christ, is the same with those before-mentioned. And what a vain wanton generation admire and applaud in their sophistical reasonings, is no more but what the primitive church triumphed over through faith, in the most subtle management of the Samosetanians, Photinians, and others. An evidence it is that Satan is not unknowing unto the workings of that vanity and darkness, of those corrupt affections in the minds of men, whereby they are disposed unto a contempt of the mystery of the gospel. Who would have thought, that the old exploded pernicious errors of the Samosetanians, Photinians, and Pelagians, against the power and grace of Christ, should enter on the world again with so much ostentation and triumph as they do at this day? But many men, so far as I can observe, are fallen into such a dislike of the Christ of God, that every thing concerning his person, spirit, and grace, is an abomination unto them. It is not want of understanding to comprehend doctrines, but hatred unto the things themselves, whereby such persons are seduced. And there is nothing of this nature, whereunto nature as corrupted, doth not contribute its utmost assistance.

(2.) There were such as opposed his divine nature under pretence of declaring it another way than the faith of the church did rest in. So was it with the Arians, in whom the gates of hell seemed once to be near a prevalency. For the whole professing world almost was once surprised into that heresy. In words they acknowledged his divine person; but added, as a limitation of that acknowledgment, that the divine nature which he had was originally created of God, and produced out of nothing, with a double blasphemy, denying him to be the true God, and making a God of a mere creature. But in all these attempts the opposition of

the gates of hell unto the church, respected faith in the person of Christ as the Son of the living God.

(2.) By some his human nature was opposed, for no stone did Satan leave unturned in the pursuit of his great design. And that which in all these things he aimed at, was the substitution of a false Christ, in the room of him who in one person was both the Son of man, and the Son of the living God. And herein he infected the minds of men with endless imaginations. Some denied him to have any real human nature, but to have been a phantasm, an appearance, a dispensation, a mere cloud acted by divine power; some that he was made of heavenly flesh, brought from above, and which, as some also affirmed, was a parcel of the divine nature. Some affirmed that his body was not animated as ours are, by a rational soul, but was immediately acted by the power of the Divine Being, which was unto it in the room of a living soul. Some that his body was of an ethereal nature, and was at length turned into the sun; with many such diabolical delusions. And there yet want not attempts in these days, of various sorts, to destroy the verity of his human nature; and I know not what some late fantastical opinions about the nature of glorified bodies may tend unto. The design of Satan in all these pernicious imaginations, is to break the cognation and alliance between Christ in his human nature and the church, whereon the salvation of it doth absolutely depend.

3. He raised a vehement opposition against the hypostatical union, or the union of these two natures in one person. This he did in the Nestorian heresy, which greatly, and for a long time, pestered the church. The authors and promoters of this opinion, granted the Lord Christ to have a divine nature, to be the Son of the living God. They also acknowledged the truth of his human nature, that he was truly a man even as we are. But the personal union between these two natures they denied. A union, they said, there was between them, but such as consisted only in love, power, and care. God did, as they imagined, eminently and powerfully manifest himself in the man Christ Jesus, had him in an especial regard and love, and did more act in him than in any other. But that the Son of God assumed our nature into personal subsistence with himself, whereby whole

Christ was one person, and all his mediatory acts were the acts of that one person, of him who was both God and man; this they would not acknowledge. And this pernicious imagination, though it seem to make great concessions of truth, doth no less effectually evert the foundation of the church than the former. For if the divine and human nature of Christ do not constitute one individual person, all that he did for us was only as a man, which would have been altogether insufficient for the salvation of the church, nor had God redeemed it with his own blood. This seems to be the opinion of some amongst us at this day about the person of Christ. They acknowledge the being of the eternal Word, the Son of God. And they allow in the like manner the verity of his human nature, or own that man Christ Jesus. Only they say, that the eternal Word was in him and with him in the same kind, as it is with other believers; but in a supreme degree of manifestation and power. But though in these things there is a great endeavour to put a new colour and appearance on old imaginations, the design of Satan is one and the same in them all, namely, to oppose the building of the church upon its proper sole foundation. And these things shall be afterward expressly spoken unto.

I intend no more in these instances but briefly to demonstrate that the principal opposition of the gates of hell unto the church, lay always unto the building of it by faith on the person of Christ.

It were easy also to demonstrate that Mahometanism, which hath been so sore a stroke unto the Christian profession, is nothing but a concurrence and combination of these two ways, of force and fraud, in opposition unto the person of Christ.

It is true that Satan, after all this, by another way, attempted the doctrine of the offices and grace of Christ, with the worship of God in him. And this he hath carried so far, as that it issued in a fatal antichristian apostacy; which is not of my present consideration.

But we may proceed to what is of our own immediate concernment. And the same work with that before described is still carried on. The person of Christ, the faith of the church concerning it, the relation of the church unto it, the building of the church on it, the life and preservation

of the church thereby, are the things that the gates of hell are engaged in opposition unto. For,

1. It is known with what subtlety and urgency his divine nature and person are opposed by the Socinians. What an accession is made daily unto their incredulity, what inclination of mind multitudes do manifest towards their pernicious ways, are also evident unto all who have any concernment in or for religion. But this argument I have laboured in on other occasions.

2. Many who expressly deny not his divine person, yet seem to grow weary of any concernment therein. A natural religion, or none at all, pleaseth them better than faith in God by Jesus Christ. That any thing more is necessary in religion, but what natural light will discover and conduct us in, with the moral duties of righteousness and honesty which it directs unto, there are too many that will not acknowledge. What is beyond the line of nature and reason is rejected as unintelligible mysteries or follies. The person and grace of Christ are supposed to breed all the disturbance in religion. Without them the common notions of the Divine Being and goodness, will guide men sufficiently unto eternal blessedness. They did so before the coming of Christ in the flesh, and may do so now he is gone to heaven.

3 There are some who have so ordered the frame of objective religion, as that it is very uncertain whether they leave any place for the person of Christ in it or no. For, besides their denial of the hypostatical union of his natures, they ascribe all that unto a light within them, which God will effect only by Christ as a mediator. What are the internal actings of their minds, as unto faith and trust towards him, I know not; but, from their outward profession, he seems to be almost excluded.

4. There are not a few who pretend high unto religion and devotion, who declare no erroneous conceptions about the doctrine of the person of Christ, who yet manifest themselves not to have that regard unto him, which the gospel prescribes and requires; hence have we so many discourses published about religion, the practical holiness and duties of obedience, written with great elegancy of style, and seriousness in argument, wherein we can meet with little or no-

thing wherein Jesus Christ, his office, or his grace, are concerned. Yea, it is odds, but in them all we shall meet with some reflections on those who judge them to be the life and centre of our religion. The things of Christ beyond the example of his conversation on the earth, are of no use with such persons unto the promotion of piety and gospel obedience. Concerning many books of this nature, we may say what a learned person did of one of old; 'There were in it many things laudable and delectable, sed nomen Jesu non erat ibi.'

5. Suited unto these manifest inclinations of the minds of men, unto a neglect of Christ in the religion they frame unto themselves, dangerous and noxious insinuations concerning what our thoughts ought to be of him, are made and tendered. As, (1.) It is scandalously proposed and answered, of what use is the consideration of the person of Christ in our religion. Such are the novel inquiries of men who suppose there is any thing in Christian religion wherein the person of Christ is of no consideration; as though it were not the life and soul that animates the whole of it, that which gives it its especial form as Christian; as though by virtue of our religion we received any thing from God, any benefit in mercy, grace, privilege, or glory, and not through the person of Christ; as though any one duty or act of religion towards God could be acceptably performed by us, without a respect unto, or a consideration of, the person of Christ; or that there were any lines of truth in religion as it is Christian, that did not relate thereunto. Such bold inquiries, with futilous answers annexed unto them, sufficiently manifest what acquaintance their authors have either with Christ himself, which in others they despise, or with his gospel, which they pretend to embrace. (2.) A mock scheme of religion is framed to represent the folly of them who design to learn the mind and will of God, in and by him. (3.) Reproachful reflections are made on such as plead the necessity of acquaintance with him, or the knowledge of him, as though thereby they rejected the use of the gospel. (4.) Professed love unto the person of Christ is traduced as a mere fancy and vapour of distempered minds, or weak imaginations. (5.) The union of the Lord Christ and his church is asserted to be political only, with respect unto

laws and rules of government. And many other things of an alike nature are asserted, derogatory unto his glory, and repugnant unto the faith of the church; such as from the foundation of Christian religion were never vented by any persons before, who did not openly avow some impious heresy concerning his person. And I no way doubt, but that men may with less guilt and scandal fall under sundry doctrinal misapprehensions concerning it, than by crying hail thereunto, to despoil it of all its glory, as unto our concernment therein, in our practical obedience unto God. Such things have we deserved to see and hear.

6. The very name or expression of preaching Christ is become a term of reproach and contempt; nor can some, as they say, understand what is meant thereby, unless it be an engine to drive all rational preaching, and so all morality and honesty out of the world.

7. That which all these things tend unto and centre in, is that horrible profaneness of life, that neglect of all gospel duties, that contempt of all spiritual graces and their effects, which the generality of them that are called Christians in many places are given up unto. I know not whether it were not more for the honour of Christ, that such persons would publicly renounce the profession of his name, rather than practically manifest their inward disregard unto him.

That by these, and the like means, Satan doth yet attempt the ruin of the church as unto its building on the everlasting rock, falls under the observation of all who are concerned in its welfare. And whatever others may apprehend concerning this state of things in the world, how any that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, especially such as are called to declare and represent him unto men in the office of the ministry, can acquit themselves to be faithful unto him, without giving their testimony against, and endeavouring to stop what lies in them, the progress of this prevailing declension from the only foundation of the church, I know not; nor will it be easy for themselves to declare. And in that variety of conceptions which are about him, and the opposition that is made unto him, there is nothing more necessary than that we should renew and attest our confession of him, as the Son of the living God, the only rock

whereon the church of them that shall be saved is founded and built.

'Pauca ideo de Christo,' as Tertullian speaks; some few things concerning the person of Christ with respect unto the confession of Peter, and the promise thereunto annexed, wherein he is declared the sole foundation of the church, will be comprised in the ensuing discourse. And he who hath ordained strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, as he hath given ability to express these poor mean contemplations of his glory, can raise by them a revenue of honour unto himself in the hearts of them that do believe. And some few things I must premise in general unto what I do design. As,

1. The instances which I shall give concerning the use and consideration of the person of Christ in Christian religion, or of him as he is the foundation whereon the church is built, are but few, and those perhaps not the most signal or eminent which the greater spiritual wisdom and understanding of others might propose. And indeed who shall undertake to declare what are the chief instances of this incomprehensible effect of divine wisdom? 'What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell;' Prov. xxx. 4. See Isa. ix. 6. It is enough for us to stand in a holy admiration at the shore of this unsearchable ocean, and to gather up some parcels of that divine treasure, wherewith the Scripture of truth is enriched.

2. I make no pretence of searching into the bottom or depths of any part of this great 'mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.' They are altogether unsearchable unto the line of the most enlightened minds in this life. What we shall farther comprehend of them in the other world, God only knows. We cannot in these things, by our utmost diligent search, 'find out the Almighty unto perfection.' The prophets could not do so of old, nor can the angels themselves at present, who 'desire to look into these things;' 1 Pet. i. 10—12. Only I shall endeavour to represent unto the faith of them that do believe, somewhat of what the Scripture doth plainly reveal, evidencing in what sense the person of Christ is the sole foundation of the church.

3. I shall not herein respect them immediately by whom

the divine person of Christ is denied and opposed. I have formerly treated thereof, beyond their contradiction in way of reply. But it is their conviction which I shall respect herein, who under an outward confession of the truth, do either notionally or practically, either ignorantly or designedly, God knows, I know not, endeavour to weaken the faith of the church in its adherence unto this foundation. Howbeit neither the one sort nor the other have any place in my thoughts, in comparison of the instruction and edification of others, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

CHAP. III.

The person of Christ the most ineffable effect of divine wisdom and goodness. Thence the next cause of all true religion. In what sense it is so.

THE person of Christ is the most glorious and ineffable effect of divine wisdom, grace, and power, and therefore is the next foundation of all acceptable religion and worship. The Divine Being itself is the first formal reason, foundation, and object of all religion. It all depends on taking God to be our God, which is the first of his commands. For religion, and the worship performed in it, is nothing but the due respect of rational creatures unto the divine nature, and its infinite excellencies. It is the glorifying of God as God, the way of expressing that respect, being regulated by the revelation of his will. Yet the divine essence is not in itself the next and immediate cause of religious worship. But it is the manifestation of this Being and its excellencies wherewith the mind of rational creatures is immediately affected, and whereby it is obliged to give that religious honour and worship which is due unto that Being, and necessary from our relation thereunto. Upon this manifestation, all creatures capable by an intelligent nature of a sense thereof, are indispensably obliged to give all divine honour and glory to God.

The way alone whereby this manifestation may be made is by outward acts and effects. For in itself the divine na-

ture is hid from all living, and dwelleth in that light whereunto no creature can approach. This therefore God first made, by the creation of all things out of nothing. The creation of man himself, with the principles of a rational intelligent nature, a conscience attesting his subordination unto God, and of all other things, declaring the glory of his wisdom, goodness, and power, was the immediate ground of all natural religion, and yet continues so to be. And the glory of it, answers the means and ways of the manifestation of the Divine Being, existence, excellencies, and properties. And where this manifestation is despised or neglected, there God himself is so; as the apostle discourseth at large, Rom. i. 18—22.

But of all the effects of the divine excellencies, the constitution of the person of Christ as the foundation of the new creation, as the mystery of godliness, was the most ineffable and glorious. I speak not of his divine person absolutely; for his distinct personality and subsistence was by an internal and eternal act of the Divine Being in the person of the Father, or eternal generation, which is essential unto the divine essence, whereby nothing anew was outwardly wrought or did exist. He was not, he is not, in that sense, the effect of divine wisdom and power of God, but the essential wisdom and power of God himself. But we speak of him only as incarnate, as he assumed our nature into personal subsistence with himself. His conception in the womb of the Virgin, as unto the integrity of human nature, was a miraculous operation of the divine power. But the prevention of that nature from any subsistence of its own, by its assumption into personal union with the Son of God, in the first instance of its conception, is that which is above all miracles, nor can be designed by that name. A mystery it is, so far above the order of all creating or providential operations, that it wholly transcends the sphere of them that are most miraculous. Herein did God glorify all the properties of the divine nature, acting in a way of infinite wisdom, grace, and condescension. The depths of the mystery hereof are open only unto him whose understanding is infinite, which no created understanding can comprehend. All other things were produced and effected by an outward emanation of power from God: 'He said, Let there be light, and

there was light.' But this assumption of our nature into hypostatical union with the Son of God, this constitution of one and the same individual person in two natures so infinitely distinct, as those of God and man, whereby the eternal was made in time, the infinite became finite, the immortal mortal, yet continuing eternal, infinite, immortal, is that singular expression of divine wisdom, goodness, and power, wherein God will be admired and glorified unto all eternity. Herein was that change introduced into the whole first creation, whereby the blessed angels were exalted, Satan and his works ruined, mankind recovered from a dismal apostacy, all things made new, all things in heaven and earth reconciled and gathered into one head, and a revenue of eternal glory raised unto God, incomparably above what the first constitution of all things in the order of nature could yield unto him.

In the expression of this mystery, the Scripture doth sometimes draw the veil over it, as that which we cannot look into. So in his conception of the Virgin with respect unto this union which accompanied it, it was told her, that 'the power of the Highest should overshadow her;' Luke i. 35. A work it was of the power of the Most High, but hid from the eyes of men in the nature of it; and, therefore, that holy thing which had no subsistence of its own, which should be born of her, should 'be called the Son of God,' becoming one person with him. Sometimes it expresseth the greatness of the mystery, and leaves it as an object of our admiration; 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.' A mystery it is, and that of those dimensions as no creature can comprehend. Sometimes it putteth things together, as that the distance of the two natures shall illustrate the glory of the one person; John i. 14. 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' But what Word was this? 'That which was in the beginning, which was with God, which was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made, who was light and life.' This Word was made flesh; not by any change of his own nature or essence; not by a transubstantiation of the divine nature into the human; not by ceasing to be what he was, but by becoming what he was not, in

taking our nature to his own, to be his own, whereby he dwelt among us. This glorious Word which is God, and described by his eternity and omnipotency in works of creation and providence, 'was made flesh,' which expresseth the lowest state and condition of human nature; without controversy great is this mystery of godliness. And in that state wherein he visibly appeared as so made flesh, those who had eyes given them from above, saw 'his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.' The eternal Word being made flesh, and manifested therein, they saw his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father. What heart can conceive, what tongue can express, the least part of the glory of this divine wisdom and grace? So also is it proposed unto us, Isa. ix. 6. 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.' He is called, in the first place Wonderful, and that deservedly; Prov. xxx. 4. That the mighty God should be a child born, and the everlasting Father a Son given unto us, may well entitle him unto the name of Wonderful.

Some amongst us say, that if there were no other way for the redemption and salvation of the church, but this only of the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God, that there was no wisdom in the contrivance of it. Vain man indeed would be wise, but is like the wild ass's colt. Was there no wisdom in the contrivance of that, which when it is effected, leaves nothing but admiration unto the utmost of all created wisdom? Who hath known the mind of the Lord in this thing? or who hath been his counsellor in this work, wherein the mighty God became a child born to us, a Son given unto us? Let all vain imaginations cease; there is nothing left unto the sons of men, but either to reject the divine person of Christ, as many do unto their own destruction, or humbly to adore the mystery of infinite wisdom and grace therein. And it will require a condescending charity to judge that those do really believe the incarnation of the Son of God, who live not in the admiration of it as the most adorable effect of divine wisdom.

The glory of the same mystery is elsewhere testified unto, Heb. i. 1—3. 'God hath spoken unto us by his Son,

by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power, by himself purged our sins.' That he purged our sins by his death, and the oblation of himself therein unto God, is acknowledged. That this should be done by him by whom the worlds were made, who is the essential brightness of the divine glory, and the express image of the person of the Father therein, who upholds, rules, sustains all things by the word of his power, whereby God purchased his church with his own blood, Acts xx. 28. is that wherein he will be admired unto eternity. See Phil. ii. 6—9.

Isaiah, chap. vi. there is a representation made of him as on a throne, filling the temple with the train of his glory. The Son of God it was who was so represented, and that as he was to fill the temple of his human nature with divine glory, when the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily. And herein the seraphims, which administered unto him, had six wings, with two whereof they covered their faces, as not being able to behold or look into the glorious mystery of his incarnation, ver. 2, 3. John xii. 40. ii. 19. Col. ii. 9. But when the same ministering spirits under the name of cherubims attended the throne of God in the administration of his providence as unto the disposal and government of the world, they had four wings only; and covered not their faces, but steadily beheld the glory of it; Ezek. i. 6. x. 2, 3.

This is the glory of Christian religion, the basis and foundation that bears the whole superstructure, the root whereon it grows. This is its life and soul, that wherein it differs from, and inconceivably excels, whatever was in true religion before, or whatever any false religion pretended unto. Religion in its first constitution, in the state of pure uncorrupted nature, was orderly, beautiful, and glorious. Man being made in the image of God, was fit and able to glorify him as God. But whereas whatever perfection God had communicated unto our nature, he had not united it unto himself in a personal union, the fabric of it quickly fell unto the ground. Want of this foundation made it obnoxious unto ruin. God manifested herein, that no gracious relation between him and our nature could be stable and permanent, unless our nature was assumed into personal

union and subsistence with himself. This is the only rock and assured foundation of the relation of the church unto God, which now can never utterly fail. Our nature is eternally secured in that union, and we ourselves, as we shall see thereby, Col. i. 17, 18. 'In him all things consist;' wherefore, whatever beauty and glory there was in the relation that was between God and man, and the relation of all things unto God by man, in the preservation whereof natural religion did consist, it had no beauty nor glory in comparison of this which doth excel, or the manifestation of God in the flesh; the appearance and subsistence of the divine and human natures in the same single individual person. And whereas God in that state had given man dominion 'over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth;' Gen. i. 26. it was all but an obscure representation of the exaltation of our nature in Christ, as the apostle declares, Heb. ii. 6—9.

There was true religion in the world after the fall, both before and after giving of the law; a religion built upon and resolved into divine revelation. And as for the outward glory of it, the administration that it was brought into under the tabernacle and temple, it was beyond what is represented in the institutions of the gospel. Yet is Christian religion, our evangelical profession, and the state of the church thereon, far more glorious, beautiful, and perfect, than that state of religion was capable of, or could attain. And as this is evident from hence, because God in his wisdom, grace, and love to the church, hath removed that state, and introduced this in the room thereof; so the apostle proves it in all considerable instances, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, written unto that purpose. There were two things before in religion; the promise which was the life of it, and the institutions of worship under the law, which were the outward glory and beauty of it. And both these were nothing, or had nothing in them, but only what they before proposed and represented of Christ, God manifested in the flesh. The promise was concerning him; and the institutions of worship did only represent him. So the apostle declares it, Col. ii. 17. Wherefore, as all the religion that was in the world after the fall, was built on the promise of this work of God in due time to be accomplished; so it is

2 Cor. iii. 18. 'Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory.' This glory which we behold is the glory of the face of God in Jesus Christ, chap. iv. 6. or the glorious representation which is made of him in the person of Christ, whereof we shall treat afterward. The glass wherein this glory is represented unto us, proposed unto our view and contemplation, is divine revelation in the gospel. Herein we behold it by faith alone. And those whose view is steadfast, who most abound in that contemplation by the exercise of faith, are thereby 'changed into the same image from glory to glory;' or are more and more renewed and transformed into the likeness of God so represented unto them.

That which shall at last perfectly effect our utmost conformity to God, and therein our eternal blessedness, is vision, or sight. 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' 1 John iii. 2. Here faith begins what sight shall perfect hereafter. But yet 'we walk by faith, and not by sight;' 2 Cor. v. 7. And although the life of faith and vision differ in degrees, or as some think in kind, yet have they both the same object, and the same operations; and there is a great cognation between them. The object of vision is the whole mystery of the divine existence and will; and its operation, is a perfect conformity unto God, a likeness unto him, wherein our blessedness shall consist. Faith hath the same object, and the same operations in its degree and measure. The great and incomprehensible mysteries of the Divine Being, of the will and wisdom of God, are its proper objects; and its operation with respect unto us, is conformity and likeness unto him. And this it doth in a peculiar manner in the contemplation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and herein we have our nearest approaches unto the life of vision, and the effects of it. For therein, 'beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory;' which perfectly to consummate is the effect of sight in glory. The exercise of faith herein doth more raise and perfect the mind, more dispose it unto holy, heavenly frames and affections, than any other duty whatever.

To be nigh unto God, and to be like unto him, are the same. To be always with him, and perfectly like him ac-

cording to the capacity of our nature, is to be eternally blessed. To live by faith in the contemplation of the glory of God in Christ, is that initiation into both, whereof we are capable in this world. The endeavours of some to contemplate and report the glory of God in nature, in the works of creation and providence, in the things of the greater and the lesser world, do deserve their just commendation; and it is that which the Scripture in sundry places calls us unto. But for any there to abide, there to bound their designs, when they have a much more noble and glorious object for their meditations, namely, the glory of God in Christ, is both to despise the wisdom of God in that revelation of himself, and to come short of that transforming efficacy of faith in the contemplation hereof, whereby we are made like unto God. For hereunto alone doth it belong, and not unto any natural knowledge, nor to any knowledge of the most secret recesses of nature.

I shall only say, that those who are inconversant with these objects of faith, whose minds are not delighted in the admiration of, and acquiescency in, things incomprehensible, such as is this constitution of the person of Christ, who would reduce all things to the measure of their own understandings, or else wilfully live in the neglect of what they cannot comprehend, do not much prepare themselves for that vision of these things in glory wherein our blessedness doth consist.

Moreover, this constitution of the person of Christ being the most admirable and ineffable effect of divine wisdom, grace, and power, it is that alone which can bear the weight of the whole superstructure of the mystery of godliness; that whereinto the whole sanctification and salvation of the church is resolved, wherein alone faith can find rest and peace. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;' 1 Cor. iii. 11. Rest and peace with God, is that which we seek after; 'What shall we do to be saved?' In this inquiry, the acts of the mediatory office of Christ are in the gospel first presented unto us, especially his oblation and intercession. Through them is he able to save unto the utmost those that come to God by him. But there were oblations for sin, and intercessions for sinners, under the old testament; yet of them all doth the apostle

affirm that they could not make them perfect that came unto God by them, nor take away conscience condemning for sin; Heb. x. 1—4. Wherefore, it is not these things in themselves that can give us rest and peace, but their relation unto the person of Christ. The oblation and intercession of any other would not have saved us. Hence for the security of our faith, we are minded that 'God redeemed the church with his own blood;' Acts xx. 28. He did so who was God, as he was manifested in the flesh. His blood alone could purge our consciences from dead works, who did offer himself unto God, through the eternal Spirit; Heb. ix. 14. And when the apostle, for our relief against the guilt of sin, calleth us unto the consideration of intercession and propitiation, he mindeth us peculiarly of his person by whom they are performed, 1 John ii. 1, 2. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.' And we may briefly consider the order of these things.

1. We suppose in this case conscience to be awakened unto a sense of sin, and of apostacy from God thereby. These things are now generally looked on as of no great concernment unto us, by some made a mock of, and by the most thought easy to be dealt withal at time convenient. But when God fixeth an apprehension of his displeasure for them on the soul, if it be not before it be too late, it will cause men to look out for relief.

2. This relief is proposed in the gospel. And it is the death and mediation of Christ alone. By them peace with God must be obtained, or it will cease for ever. But,

3. When any person comes practically to know how great a thing it is for an apostate sinner to obtain the remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, endless objections through the power of unbelief will arise unto his disquietment. Wherefore,

4. That which is principally suited to give him rest, peace, and satisfaction, and without which nothing else can so do, is the due consideration of, and the acting of faith upon, this infinite effect of divine wisdom and goodness, in the constitution of the person of Christ. This at first view will reduce the mind unto that conclusion, 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible.' For what end cannot be ef-

fected hereby? What end cannot be accomplished that was designed in it? Is any thing too hard for God? Did God ever do any thing like this, or make use of any such means for any other end whatever? Against this no objection can arise. On this consideration of him, faith apprehends Christ to be, as he is indeed, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, unto the salvation of them that do believe, and therein doth it find rest with peace.

CHAP. IV.

The person of Christ the foundation of all the counsels of God.

SECONDLY, The person of Christ is the foundation of all the counsels of God, as unto his own eternal glory in the vocation, sanctification, and salvation of the church. That which I intend is what the apostle expresseth, Eph. i. 9, 10. 'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in him.' The mysteries of the will of God, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself are his counsels concerning his own eternal glory, in the sanctification and salvation of the church here below, to be united unto that above. The absolute original hereof was in his own good pleasure, or the sovereign acting of his wisdom and will. But it was all to be effected in Christ, which the apostle twice repeats; he would gather 'all things into a head in Christ, even in him;' that is, in him alone.

Thus it is said of him with respect unto his future incarnation and work of mediation, 'that the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; that he was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was;' Prov. viii. 22, 23. The eternal personal existence of the Son of God is supposed in these expressions, as I have elsewhere proved. Without it none of these things

could be affirmed of him. But there is a regard in them, both unto his future incarnation, and the accomplishment of the counsels of God thereby. With respect thereunto, God 'possessed him in the beginning of his ways, and set him up from everlasting.' God possessed him eternally as his essential wisdom, as he was always and is always in the bosom of the Father, in the mutual, ineffable love of the Father and Son, in the eternal bond of the Spirit. But he signally possessed him 'in the beginning of his ways,' as his wisdom acting in the production of all the ways and works that are outwardly of him. The beginning of God's ways before his works, are his counsels concerning them, even as our counsels are the beginning of our ways, with respect unto future works. And he 'set him up from everlasting,' as the foundation of all the counsels of his will, in and by whom they were to be executed and accomplished.

So it is expressed, ver. 30, 31. 'I was by him, as one brought up with him: I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.' And it is added, that thus it was before 'the foundation of the world was laid, or the chiefest part of the dust of the earth was made;' that is, man was created. Not only was the delight of the Father in him, but his delight was in the habitable parts of the earth, and among the sons of men, before the creation of the world. Wherefore the eternal prospect of the work he had to do for the children of men is intended herein. In and with him God laid the foundation of all his counsels concerning his love towards the children of men; and two things may be observed herein.

1. That the person of the Son, 'was set up,' or exalted herein. 'I was set up,' saith he, 'from everlasting.' This cannot be spoken absolutely of the person of the Son himself; the divine nature being not capable of being so set up. But there was a peculiar glory and honour belonging unto the person of the Son, as designed by the Father, unto the execution of all the counsels of his will. Hence was that prayer of his upon the accomplishment of them, John xvii. 5. 'And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' To suppose that the Lord Christ prayeth in these words, for such a real

communication of the properties of the divine nature unto the human, as should render it immense, omniscient, and unconfined unto any space, is to think that he prayed for the destruction, and not the exaltation of it. For on that supposition, it must necessarily lose all its own essential properties, and consequently its being. Nor doth he seem to pray only for the manifestation of his divine nature, which was eclipsed in his exinanition or appearance in the form of a servant. There was no need to express this, by the 'glory which he had with the Father before the world was.' For he had it not in any especial manner before the world was; but equally from eternity, and in every moment of time. Wherefore he had a peculiar glory of his own with the Father before the world was. And this was no other, but that especial exaltation which he had when he was 'set up from everlasting,' as the foundation of the counsels of God, for the salvation of the church. In those eternal transactions that were between the Father and the Son, with respect unto his incarnation and mediation, or his undertaking to execute and fulfil the eternal counsels of the wisdom and grace of the Father, there was an especial glory which the Son had with him. The 'glory which he had with the Father before the world was.' For the manifestation hereof he now prays; and that the glory of his goodness, grace, and love in his peculiar undertaking of the execution of the counsels of God, might be made to appear. And this is the principal design of the gospel. It is the declaration as of the grace of God the Father, so of the love, grace, goodness, and compassion of the Son, in undertaking from everlasting the accomplishment of God's counsels in the salvation of the church. And hereby doth he hold up the pillars of the earth, or support this inferior creation, which otherwise, with the inhabitants of it, would by sin have been dissolved. And those by whom the eternal, divine pre-existence in the form of God, antecedent unto his incarnation is denied, do what lies in them expressly to despoil him of all that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. So we have herein the whole of our design. 'In the beginning of God's ways before his works of old;' that is, in his eternal counsels with respect unto the children of men, or the sanctification and salvation of the church, the Lord possessed, enjoyed

the Son as his eternal wisdom, in and with whom they were laid, in and by whom they were to be accomplished, wherein his delights were with the sons of men.

2. That there was an ineffable delight between the Father and the Son in this his setting up or exaltation. 'I was,' saith he, 'daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.' It is not absolutely the mutual, eternal delight of the Father and the Son, arising from the perfection of the same divine excellencies in each person that is intended. But respect is plainly had unto the counsels of God, concerning the salvation of mankind by him who is his power and wisdom unto that end. This counsel of peace was originally between Jehovah and the Branch; Zech. vi. 13. or the Father and the Son, as he was to be incarnate. For therein was he 'foreordained before the foundation of the world;' 1 Pet. i. 20. namely, to be a Saviour and a deliverer, by whom all the counsels of God were to be accomplished; and this by his own will and concurrence in counsel with the Father. And such a foundation was laid of the salvation of the church in these counsels of God, as transacted between the Father and the Son, that it is said, that 'eternal life was promised before the world began;' Tit. i. 2. For although the first formal promise was given after the fall, yet was there such a preparation of grace and eternal life in these counsels of God, with his unchangeable purpose to communicate them unto us, that all the faithfulness of God was engaged in them. 'God, that cannot lie, hath promised before the world began.' There was eternal life with the Father, that is, in his counsel treasured up in Christ, and in him was afterward manifested unto us; 1 John i. 2. And to shew the stability of this purpose and counsel of God, with the infallible consequence of his actual promise, and efficacious accomplishment thereof, 'grace' is said to be 'given us in Christ Jesus before the world began;' 2 Tim. i. 9.

In these counsels did God delight, or in the person of Christ, as his eternal wisdom in their contrivance, and as the means of their accomplishment in his future incarnation. Hence he so testifieth of him, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth;' Isa. xlii. 1. as he also proclaims the same delight in him from heaven in the days of his flesh; Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5. He was the de-

light of God, as he in whom all his counsels for his own glory in the redemption and salvation of the church, were laid and founded. Isa. xlix. 3. 'My servant in whom I will be glorified;' that is, 'by raising the tribes of Jacob, restoring the preserved of Israel, in being a light unto the Gentiles, and the salvation of God unto the ends of the earth;' ver. 6.

We conceive not aright of the counsels of God, when we think of nothing but the effect of them, and the glory that ariseth from their accomplishment. It is certainly true that they shall all issue in his glory, and the demonstration of it shall fill up eternity. The manifestative glory of God unto eternity, consists in the effects and accomplishment of his holy counsels. Heaven is the state of the actual accomplishment of all the counsels of God in the sanctification and salvation of the church. But it is not with God as it is with men. Let men's counsels be never so wise, it must needs abate of their satisfaction in them, because their conjectures (and more they have not) of their effects and events are altogether uncertain. But all the counsels of God having their entire accomplishment through revolutions perplexing and surpassing all created understandings, enclosed in them infallibly and immutably, the great satisfaction, complacency, and delight of the Divine Being is in these counsels themselves.

God doth delight in the actual accomplishment of his works. He made not this world, nor any thing in it for its own sake. Much less did he make this earth to be a theatre for men to act their lusts upon, the use which it is now put to and groans under. But he made 'all things for himself;' Prov. xvi. 4. he 'made them for his pleasure;' Rev. iv. 11. that is, not only by an act of sovereignty, but to his own delight and satisfaction. And a double testimony did he give hereunto with respect unto the works of creation. (1.) In the approbation which he gave of the whole upon its survey. And 'God saw all that he had made, and behold it was good;' Gen. i. 31. There was that impression of his divine wisdom, power, and goodness upon the whole, as manifested his glory, wherein he was well pleased. For immediately thereon, all creatures capable of the conception and apprehension of his glory 'sang forth his praise;' Job

xxxviii. 6, 7. (2.) In that he rested from his works, or in them when they were finished; Gen. ii. 2. It was not a rest of weariness from the labour of his work, but a rest of complacency and delight in what he had wrought, that God entered into.

But the principal delight and complacency of God is in his eternal counsels. For all his delight in his works, is but in the effects of those divine properties, whose primitive and principal exercise is in the counsels themselves, from whence they proceed. Especially is it so as unto these counsels of the Father and the Son, as to the redemption and salvation of the church, wherein they delight, and mutually rejoice in each other on their account. They are all eternal acts of God's infinite wisdom, goodness, and love; a delight and complacency wherein is no small part of the divine blessedness. These things are absolutely inconceivable unto us, and ineffable by us; we cannot find the Almighty out unto perfection. However certain it is from the notions we have of the Divine Being and excellencies, and from the revelation he hath made of himself, that there is an infinite delight in God, in the eternal actings of his wisdom, goodness, and love, wherein, according to our weak and dark apprehensions of things, we may safely place no small portion of divine blessedness. Self-existence in its own immense being, thence self-sufficiency unto itself in all things, and thereon self-satisfaction, is the principal notion we have of divine blessedness.

1. God delighteth in these his eternal counsels in Christ, as they are acts of infinite wisdom, as they are the highest instance wherein it will exert itself. Hence in the accomplishment of them Christ is emphatically said to be the 'Wisdom of God;' 1 Cor. i. 24. He in whom the counsels of his wisdom were to be fulfilled. And in him is the manifold wisdom of God made known; Eph. iii. 10. Infinite wisdom being that property of the divine nature, whereby all the actings of it are disposed and regulated suitably unto his own glory in all his divine excellencies, he cannot but delight in all the acts of it. Even amongst men, whose wisdom compared with that of God is folly itself, yet is there nothing wherein they have a real rational complacency, suitable unto the principles of their nature, but in such

actings of that wisdom which they have, and such as it is, towards the proper ends of their being and duty. How much more doth God delight himself in the infinite perfection of his own wisdom, and its eternal acting, for the representation of all the glorious excellencies of his nature. Such are his counsels concerning the salvation of the church by Jesus Christ, and because they were all laid in him and with him, therefore is he said to be his 'delight continually before the world was.' This is that which is proposed as the object of our admiration; Rom. xi. 33—36.

2. They are acts of infinite goodness, whereon the divine nature cannot but be infinitely delighted in them. As wisdom is the directive principle of all divine operations, so goodness is the communicative principle that is effectual in them. He is good and he doth good; yea he doth good because he is good, and for no other reason; not by the necessity of nature, but by the intervention of a free act of his will. His goodness is absolutely infinite, essentially perfect in itself; which it cannot be if it belonged unto it naturally and necessarily to act and communicate itself unto any thing without God himself. The divine nature is eternally satisfied in and with its own goodness; but it is that principle which is the immediate fountain of all the communications of good unto others, by a free act of the will of God. So when Moses desired to see his glory, he tells him, that 'he will cause all his goodness to pass before him, and would be gracious unto whom he would be gracious;' Exod. xxxiii. 19. All divine operations in the gracious communication of God himself, are from his goodness, by the intervention of a free act of his will. And the greatest exercise and emanation of divine goodness, was, in these holy counsels of God, for the salvation of the church by Jesus Christ. For whereas in all other effects of his goodness he gives of his own, herein he gave himself in taking our nature upon him. And thence, as he expresseth the design of man in his fall as upbraiding him with folly and ingratitude, 'Behold the man is become as one of us;' Gen. iii. 22. We may with all humble thankfulness express the means of our recovery, Behold God is become like one of us, as the apostle declares it at large, Phil. ii. 6—8. It is the nature of sincere goodness, even in its lowest degree, above all other habits or principles of nature,

to give a delight and complacency unto the mind in the exercise of itself, and communication of its effects. A good man doth both delight in doing good, and hath an abundant reward for the doing it, in the doing of it. And what shall we conceive concerning eternal, absolute, infinite, perfect, immixed goodness, acting itself in the highest instance (in an effect cognate and like unto it), that it can extend unto. So was it in the counsels of God concerning the incarnation of his Son, and the salvation of the church thereby. No heart can conceive, no tongue can express, the least portion of that ineffable delight of the holy, blessed God, in these counsels, wherein he acted and expressed unto the utmost his own essential goodness. Shall a liberal man devise liberal things, because they are suited unto his inclination? Shall a good man find a secret refreshment and satisfaction in the exercise of that low, weak, imperfect, mixed goodness, that his nature is inlaid withal; and shall not he whose goodness is essential unto him, whose being it is, and in whom it is the immediate principle of communicating himself unto others, be infinitely delighted in the highest exercise of it which divine wisdom did direct?

The effect of these eternal counsels of God in future glory, is reserved for them that do believe; and therein will there be the nearest manifestation of the glory of God himself unto them, when he shall be glorified in his saints, and eternally admired in all that believe. But the blessed delight and satisfaction of God, was, and is, in those counsels themselves, as they were acts of his infinite wisdom and goodness. Herein was the Lord Christ his 'delight continually before the foundation of the world;' in that in him were all these counsels laid, and through him were they all to be accomplished. The constitution of his person was the only way whereby divine wisdom and goodness would act and communicate of themselves unto mankind, in which actings are the eternal delight and complacency of the Divine Being.

3. Love and grace have the same influence into the counsels of God, as wisdom and goodness have. And in the Scripture notion of these things they superadd unto goodness this consideration, that their object is sinners, and those that are unworthy. God doth universally communicate of

his goodness unto all his creatures, though there be an especial exercise of it towards them that believe. But as unto his love and grace as they are peculiar unto his elect, the church chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, so they respect them primarily in a lost undone condition by sin; Rom. v. 8. 'God commendeth his love unto us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' God is love, saith the apostle, his nature is essentially so. And the best conception of the natural internal actings of the holy persons is love; and all the acts of it are full of delight. This is, as it were, the womb of all the eternal counsels of God, which renders his complacency in them ineffable. Hence doth he so wonderfully express his delight and complacency in the actings of his love towards the church; Zeph. iii. 17. 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will rejoice over thee with singing.' The reason why in the salvation of the church, he rejoiceth with joy, and joyeth with singing, the highest expression of divine complacency, is because he resteth in his love, and so is pleased in the exercise of its effects.

But we must return to manifest in particular how all these counsels of God were laid in the person of Christ, to which end the things ensuing may be distinctly considered.

1. God made all things in the beginning good, exceeding good. The whole of his work was disposed into a perfect harmony, beauty, and order, suited unto that manifestation of his own glory which he designed therein. And as all things had their own individual existence, and operations suited unto their being, and capable of an end, a rest, or a blessedness, congruous unto their natures and operations; so in the various respects which they had each to other in their mutual supplies, assistances, and co-operation, they all tended unto that ultimate end, of his eternal glory. For as in their beings and existence they were effects of infinite power, so were their mutual respects and ends disposed in infinite wisdom. Thereon were the eternal power and wisdom of God glorified in them; the one in their production, the other in their disposal into their order and harmony. Man was a creature that God made, that by him he might

receive the glory that he aimed at, in and by the whole inanimate creation, both that below which was for his use, and that above which was for his contemplation. This was the end of our nature in its original constitution. Thereunto are we again restored in Christ; James i. 18. Psal. civ. 24. cxxxvi. 5. Rom. i. 20.

2. God was pleased to permit the entrance of sin, both in heaven above and in earth beneath, whereby this whole order and harmony was disturbed. There are yet characters of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, remaining on the works of creation, and inseparable from their beings. But the primitive glory that was to redound unto God by them, especially as unto all things here below, was from the obedience of man, unto whom they were put in subjection. Their good estate depended on their subordination unto him in a way of natural use, as his did on God in the way of moral obedience; Gen. i. 26. 28. Psal. viii. 6—8. Man, as was said, is a creature which God made, that by him he might receive the glory that he aimed at, in and by the whole inanimate creation. This was the end of our nature in its original constitution. Thereunto are we again restored in Christ; James i. 18. But the entrance of sin cast all this order into confusion, and brought the curse on all things here below. Hereby were they deprived of that estate wherein they were declared exceeding good, and cast into that of vanity under the burden whereof they groan, and will do so to the end; Gen. iii. 17, 18. Rom. viii. 20, 21. And these things we must again consider afterward.

3. Divine wisdom was no way surprised with this disaster. God had from all eternity laid in provisions of counsels for the recovery of all things into a better and more permanent estate than what was lost by sin. This is the ἀνάψυξις, the ἀποκατάστασις πάντων, the revification, the restitution of all things; Acts iii. 19. 21. The ἀνακεφαλαίωσις, or the gathering all things in heaven and earth into a new head in Christ Jesus; Eph. i. 10. For although it may be, there is more of curiosity than of edification, in a scrupulous inquiry into the method or order of God's eternal decrees or counsels, and the disposal of them into a subserviency one unto another; yet this is necessary from the infinite wisdom, prescience, and immutability of God, that he is

surprised with nothing, that he is put unto no new counsels by any events in the works of creation. All things were disposed by him, into those ways and methods, and that from eternity, which conduce unto, and certainly issue in, that glory which is ultimately intended. For as we are careful to state the eternal decrees of God, and the actual operations of his providence, so as that the liberty of the will of man as the next cause of all his moral actions, be not infringed thereby; so ought we to be careful not to ascribe such a sacrilegious liberty unto the wills of any creatures, as that God should be surprised, imposed on, or changed by any of their actings whatever. For 'known unto him are all his works from the foundation of the world,' and with him there is neither 'variableness nor shadow of turning.'

4. There were therefore eternal counsels of God whereby he disposed all things into a new order unto his own glory, in the sanctification and salvation of the church. And of them two things may be considered. (1.) Their original. (2.) The design of their accomplishment.

Their first spring or original was in the divine will and wisdom alone, without respect unto any external moving cause. No reason can be given, no cause be assigned of these counsels, but the will of God alone. Hence are they called or described by, the 'good pleasure which he purposed in himself;' Eph. i. 9. 'The purpose of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his will;' ver. 11. 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath given first unto him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things;' Rom. xi. 34—36. The incarnation of Christ, and his mediation thereon, were not the procuring cause of these eternal counsels of God; but the effects of them, as the Scripture constantly declares. But the design of their accomplishment was laid in the person of the Son alone. As he was the essential wisdom of God, all things were at first created by him. But upon a prospect of the ruin of all by sin, God would in and by him, as he was foreordained to be incarnate, restore all things. The whole counsel of God unto this end centred in him alone. Hence their foundation is rightly said to be laid in him, and is declared so to be by the apostle, Eph. i. 4. For the spring of

the sanctification and salvation of the church lies in election, the decree whereof compriseth the counsels of God concerning them. Herein God from the beginning 'chooseth us unto salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit;' 2 Thess. ii. 13. The one being the end he designeth, the other the means and way thereof. But this he did in Christ; 'he chooseth us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love;' that is, 'unto salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit.' In him we were not actually, nor by faith, before the foundation of the world; yet were we then chosen in him, as the only foundation of the execution of all the counsels of God, concerning our sanctification and salvation.

Thus as all things were originally made and created by him, as he was the essential wisdom of God; so all things are renewed and recovered by him, as he is the provisional wisdom of God in and by his incarnation. Therefore are these things put together and compared unto his glory; Col. i. 15—19. 'He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.'

Two things as the foundation of what is ascribed unto the Lord Christ in the ensuing discourse, are asserted, ver. 15. (1.) That he is 'the image of the invisible God.' (2.) That he is 'the first-born of every creature;' things seeming very distant in themselves, but gloriously united and centring in his person.

(1.) He is 'the image of the invisible God;' or as it is elsewhere expressed, he is 'in the form of God,' his essential form, for other form there is none in the divine nature. The 'brightness of the glory, and express image of the Father's person.' And he is called here the 'invisible God,' not absolutely with respect unto his essence, though it be most true, the divine essence being absolutely invisible, and that equally, whether considered as in the Father or in the Son; but he is called so with respect unto his counsels, his will, his

love, and his grace. For so 'none hath seen him at any time, but the only-begotten which is in the bosom of the Father, he declares him;' John i. 18. As he is thus the essential, the eternal image of the invisible God, his wisdom and power, the efficiency of the first creation, and its consistence being created, is ascribed unto him, ver. 16, 17. 'By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and in earth, visible and invisible.' And because of the great notions and apprehensions that were then in the world, especially among the Jews, unto whom the apostle had respect in this epistle, of the greatness and glory of the invisible part of the creation in heaven above, he mentions them in particular, under the most glorious titles that any could, or then did ascribe unto them; 'whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him;' the same expression that is used of God absolutely, Rom. xi. 36. Rev. iv. 11. Add hereunto those other places to this purpose, John i. 1—3. Heb. i. 1—3. and those that are not under the efficacy of spiritual infatuations, cannot but admire at the power of unbelief, the blindness of the minds of men, and the craft of Satan, in them who deny the divine nature of Jesus Christ. For whereas the apostle plainly affirms, that the works of the creation do demonstrate the eternal power and Godhead of him by whom they were created; Rom. i. 19, 20. And not only so, but it is uncontrollably evident in the light of nature; it being so directly, expressly, frequently affirmed, that all things whatever, absolutely, and in their distributions into heaven and earth, with the things contained respectively in them, were made and created by Christ; it is the highest rebellion against the light and teachings of God, to disbelieve his divine existence and power.

(2.) Again it is added, that he is 'the first-born of every creature;' which principally respects the new creation, as it is declared, ver. 18. 'He is the head of the body the church; the beginning; who is the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.' For in him were all the counsels of God laid for the recovery of all things unto himself; as he was to be incarnate. And the accomplishment of these counsels of God by him, the apostle declares at large in the ensuing verses. And these things are both

conjoined and composed in this place. As God the Father did nothing in the first creation but by him as his eternal wisdom, John i. 3. Heb. i. 2. Prov. viii. so he designed nothing in the new creation or restoration of all things unto his glory, but in him as he was to be incarnate. Wherefore in his person were laid all the foundation of the counsels of God for the sanctification and salvation of the church. Herein he is glorified, and that in a way unspeakably exceeding all that glory which would have accrued unto him from the first creation, had all things abode in their primitive constitution.

His person, therefore, is the foundation of the church, the great mystery of godliness, or the religion we profess; the entire life and soul of all spiritual truth; in that all the counsels of the wisdom, grace, and goodness of God, for the redemption, vocation, sanctification, and salvation of the church, were all laid in him, and by him were all to be accomplished.

CHAP. V.

The person of Christ the great representative of God and his will.

WHAT may be known of God, is his nature and existence, with the holy counsels of his will. A representation of them unto us, is the foundation of all religion, and the means of our conformity unto him, wherein our present duty and future blessedness do consist. For to know God, so as thereby to be made like unto him, is the chief end of man. This is done perfectly only in the person of Christ, all other means of it being subordinate thereunto, and none of them of the same nature therewithal. The end of the word itself is to instruct us in the knowledge of God in Christ. That, therefore, which I shall now demonstrate, is, that in the person and mediation of Christ (which are inseparable in all the respects of faith unto him) there is made unto us a blessed representation of the glorious properties of the divine nature, and of the holy counsels of the will of God. The first of these I shall speak unto in this chapter,

the other in that which ensues; wherein we shall manifest how all divine truths do centre in the person of Christ. And the consideration of sundry things are necessary unto the explication hereof.

1. God in his own essence, being, and existence, is absolutely incomprehensible. His nature being immense, and all his holy properties essentially infinite, no creature can directly or perfectly comprehend them, or any of them. He must be infinite that can perfectly comprehend that which is infinite; wherefore God is perfectly known unto himself only; but as for us how little a portion is heard of him? Hence he is called the 'invisible God,' and said to dwell in light inaccessible. The subsistence of his most single and simple nature in three distinct persons, though it raises and ennobles faith in its revelation, yet it amazeth reason which would trust to itself in the contemplation of it; whence men grow giddy who will own no other guide, and are carried out of the way of truth. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;' John i. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 16.

2. Therefore, we can have no direct intuitive notions or apprehensions of the divine essence, or its properties. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us. Whatever is pleaded for an intellectual vision of the essense of God in the light of glory, yet none pretend unto a possibility of an immediate full comprehension of it. But in our present state, God is unto us as he was unto Moses under all the external manifestations of his glory, 'in thick darkness;' Exod. xx. 21. All the rational conceptions of the minds of men are swallowed up, and lost, when they would exercise themselves directly on that which is absolutely immense, eternal, infinite. When we say it is so, we know not what we say, but only that it is not otherwise. What we deny of God, we know in some measure, but what we affirm we know not; only we declare what we believe and adore. 'Neque sensus est ejus, neque phantasia, neque opinio, nec ratio, nec scientia,' says Dionys. De Divin. Nomin. (1.) We have no means, no corporeal, no intellectual instrument or power for the comprehension of him; nor hath any other creature. [illegible]

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and their own, which allowed of no measures between them; so as unto the event God himself hath declared that in his own way such a representation was needful unto that end of the manifestation of himself which he designed. For,

6. All this is done in the person of Christ. He is the complete image and perfect representation of the Divine Being and excellencies. I do not speak of it absolutely, but as God proposeth himself as the object of our faith, trust, and obedience. Hence it is God as the Father, who is so peculiarly represented in him, and by him; as he says, 'he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also;' John xiv. 9.

Unto such a representation two things are required. (1.) That all the properties of the divine nature, the knowledge whereof is necessary unto our present obedience and future blessedness, be expressed in it, and manifested unto us. (2.) That there be therein the nearest approach of the divine nature made unto us whereof it is capable, and which we can receive. And both these are found in the person of Christ, and therein alone.

In the person of Christ we consider both the constitution of it in the union of his natures, and the respect of it unto his work of mediation, which was the end of that constitution. And,

(1.) Therein as so considered, is there a blessed representation made unto us of all the holy properties of the nature of God; of his wisdom, his power, his goodness, grace and love, his righteousness, truth and holiness, his mercy and patience. As this is affirmed concerning them all in general, or the glory of God in them, which is seen and known only in the face of Christ; so it were easy to manifest the same concerning every one of them in particular, by express testimonies of Scripture. But I shall at present confine myself unto the proofs of the whole assertion which do ensue.

(2.) There is therein the most incomprehensible approach of the divine nature made unto ours; such as all the imaginations of men did ever infinitely fall short of; as hath been before declared. In the assumption of our nature into personal union with himself, and our cognation unto God thereby, with the union which believers obtain with him thereon, 'being one in the Father and the Son, as the Father

is in the Son, and the Son in the Father;' John xvii. 20. 21. there is the nearest approach of the Divine Being unto us, that the nature of things is capable of. Both these ends were designed in those representations of God, which were of human invention; but in both of them they utterly failed. For instead of representing any of the glorious properties of the nature of God, they debased it, dishonoured it, and filled the minds of men with vile conceptions of it. And instead of bringing God nearer unto them, they put themselves at an infinite moral distance from him. But my design is the confirmation of our assertions from the Scripture.

Col. i. 15. 'He is the image of the invisible God.' This title or property of 'invisible,' the apostle here gives unto God, to shew what need there was of an image or representation of him unto us, as well as of one in whom he would declare the counsels of his will. For he intends not only the absolute invisibility of his essence, but his being unknown unto us in himself. Wherefore, as was before observed, mankind was generally prone to make visible representations of this invisible God, that in them they might contemplate on him, and have him present with them as they foolishly imagined. Unto the craft of Satan abusing this inclination of mankind, idolatry owes its original and progress in the world: howbeit necessary it was that this invisible God should be so represented unto us by some image of him, as that we might know him, and that therein he might be worshipped according unto his own mind and will. But this must be of his own contrivance, an effect of his own infinite wisdom. Hence as he absolutely rejecteth all images and representations of him of men's devisings for the reasons before-mentioned, and declares that the honour that any should think would thereby redound unto him, was not given unto him, but unto the devil; so that which he hath provided himself, unto his own holy ends and purposes, is every way approved of him. For he will have all men honour the Son even as they honour the Father; and so as that he who 'honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father:' John v. 23. 25.

This image, therefore, is the person of Christ. 'He is the image of the invisible God.' This is the first place [illegible]

there must be a nearer and more evident manifestation of God; that made by the works of creation and providence being not sufficient to guide them unto him. But in the pursuit hereof, they utterly ruined themselves; they would do what God had not done. By common consent they framed representations of God unto themselves; and were so besotted therein, that they utterly lost the benefit which they might have received by the manifestation of him in the works of the creation, and took up with most foolish imaginations. For whereas they might have learned from thence, the being of God, his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, namely, in the impressions and characters of them on the things that were made; in their own representations of him, they 'changed the glory of the invisible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things;' Rom. i. 23. Wherefore this common presumption, that there was no way to attain a due sense of the Divine Being, but by some representation of it, though true in itself, yet by the craft of Satan, and foolish superstitions of the minds of men, became the occasion of all idolatry and flagitious wickedness in the world. Hence were all those ἐπιφανειαι, or supposed illustrious appearances of their gods, which Satan deluded the Gentiles by; and hence were all the ways which they devised to bring God into human nature, or the likeness of it. Wherefore in all the revelations that ever God made of himself, his mind and will, he always laid this practice of making representations of him, under the most severe interdict and prohibition. And this he did evidently for these two reasons:

(1.) Because it was a bold and foolish intrenching upon his provisional wisdom in the case. He had taken care that there should be a glorious image and representation of himself, infinitely above what any created wisdom could find out. But as when Moses went into the mount, the Israelites would not wait for his return, but made a calf in his stead; so mankind, refusing to wait for the actual exhibition of that glorious image of himself which God had provided, they broke in upon his wisdom and sovereignty, to make some of their own. For this cause was God so provoked, that he gave them up to such stupid blindness, that in those things wherein they thought to shew themselves wise, and to bring

God nearer unto them, they became contemptibly foolish, abased their nature, and all the noble faculties of their minds unto hell, and departed unto the utmost distance from God, whom they sought to bring near unto them.

(2.) Because nothing that can fall into the invention or imagination of men, could make any other but false representations of him, and so substitute an idol in his place. His own immediate works have great characters of his divine excellencies upon them, though unto us obscure and not clearly legible without the light of revelation. Somewhat he did of old represent of his glorious presence, though not of his being, in the visible institutions of his worship. But all men's inventions to this end, which are neither divine works of nature, nor divine institutions of worship, are all but false representations of God, and therefore accursed by him.

Wherefore it is granted that God hath placed many characters of his divine excellencies upon his works of creation and providence; many of his glorious presence upon the tabernacle and temple of old; but none of these things ever did or could give such a representation of him, as wherein the souls of men might fully acquiesce, or obtain such conceptions of him as might enable them to worship and honour him in a due manner. They cannot, I say, by all that may be seen in them, and learned from them, represent God as the complete object of all our affections, of all the actings of our souls in faith, trust, love, fear, obedience, in that way whereby he may be glorified, and we may be brought unto the everlasting fruition of him. This therefore is yet to be inquired after. Wherefore,

5. A mere external doctrinal revelation of the divine nature and properties, without any exemplification, or real representation of them, was not sufficient unto the end of God in the manifestation of himself. This is done in the Scripture. But the whole Scripture is built on this foundation, or proceeds on this supposition, that there is a real representation of the divine nature unto us, which it declares and describes. And as there was such a notion on the minds of all men, that some representation of God, wherein he might be near unto them, was necessary, which arose from the consideration of the infinite distance between the divine nature

is in me, and I am in the Father;' namely, because they were one in nature and essence. For the divine nature being simply the same in them all, the divine persons are in each other by virtue of the oneness of that nature.

2. That he be distinct from him. For otherwise there cannot be a seeing of the Father by the seeing of him. He is seen in the Son as represented by him, as his image; the Word, the Son of the Father, as he was with God. The unity of nature, and the distinction of persons, is the ground of that assertion of our Saviour; 'he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also.'

3. But moreover, the Lord Christ hath a respect herein unto himself, in his entire person as he was incarnate, and therein unto the discharge of his mediatory work. 'Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me?' Whilst he was with them, dwelt among them, conversed with them, he was the great representative of the glory of God unto them. And notwithstanding this particular mistake, they did then see his glory, 'the glory of the only-begotten of the Father;' John i. 14. And in him was manifested the glory of the Father. 'He is the image of the invisible God.' In him God was, in him he dwelt, in him is he known, in him is he worshipped according unto his own will, in him is there a nearer approach made unto us, by the divine nature, than ever could enter into the heart of man to conceive. In the constitution of his person, of two natures, so infinitely distinct and separate in themselves, and in the work it was designed unto, the wisdom, power, goodness, love, grace, mercy, holiness, and faithfulness of God, are manifested unto us. This is the one blessed 'image of the invisible God,' wherein we may learn, wherein we may contemplate and adore, all his divine perfections.

The same truth is testified unto, Heb. i. 3. 'God spake unto us in the Son, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.' His divine nature is here included, as that without which he could not have made a perfect representation of God unto us. For the apostle speaks of him, as of him 'by whom the worlds were made,' and who 'upholdeth all things by the word of his power.' Yet doth he not speak of him absolutely as he was God, but also as he, who 'in himself purged our sins, and is sat down

at the right hand of the Majesty on high; that is, in his whole person. Herein he is ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, the effulgency, the resplendency of divine glory; that wherein the divine glory shines forth, in an evident manifestation of itself unto us. And as a farther explication of the same mystery, it is added, that he is the character or 'express image' of the person of the Father. Such an impression of all the glorious properties of God is on him, as that thereby they become legible unto all them that believe.

So the same apostle affirms again, that he is the 'image of God;' 2 Cor. iv. 4. in what sense, and unto what end, he declares, ver. 6. 'We have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Still it is supposed that the glory of God, as essentially in him is invisible unto us, and incomprehensible by us. Yet is there a knowledge of it necessary unto us, that we may live unto him, and come unto the enjoyment of him. This we obtain only in the face or person of Christ ἐν προσώπῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ; for in him that glory is represented unto us.

This was the testimony which the apostles gave concerning him, when he dwelt among them in the days of his flesh. 'They saw his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;' John i. 14. The divine glory was manifest in him, and in him they saw the glory of the Father. So the same apostle witnesseth again who recorded this testimony, 1 John i. 2. 'For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness that eternal life was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.' In the Son incarnate that eternal life which was originally in and with the Father, was manifest unto us.

It may be said, that the Scripture itself is sufficient for this end of the declaration of God unto us, so that there is no need of any other representation of him; and these things serve only to turn the minds of men form learning the mind and will of God therein, to seek for all in the person of Christ. But the true end of proposing these things, is to draw men unto the diligent study of the Scripture, wherein alone they are revealed and declared. And in its proper use, and unto its proper end, it is perfect and most sufficient. It is λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'the word of God;' howbeit it is not λόγος οὐσιωδής, the internal, essential word of God, but λόγος

προφόρικος, the external word spoken by him. It is not, therefore, nor can be the image of God, either essential or representative, but is the revelation and declaration of it into us, without which we can know nothing of it.

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the express image of the person of the Father. And the principal end of the whole Scripture, especially of the gospel, is to declare him so to be, and how he is so. What God promised by his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son Jesus Christ, that is fully declared in the gospel; Rom. i. 1—4 The gospel is the declaration of Christ as 'the power of God, and the wisdom of God;' 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. or an evident representation of God in his person and mediation unto us; Gal. iii. 1. Wherefore three things are herein to be considered.

1. 'Objectum reale et formale fidei;' the real, formal object of our faith in this matter. This is the person of Christ the Son of God incarnate, the representative image of the glory of God unto us; as in the testimonies insisted on.

2. 'Medium revelans,' or 'lumen deferens;' the means of its revelation, or the objective light whereby the perception and knowledge of it is conveyed unto our minds. This is the gospel; compared unto a glass because of the prospect which we have of the image of God therein; 1 Cor. iii. 18. but without it, by any other means, and not by it, we can behold nothing of this image of God.

3. 'Lumen præparans, elevans, disponens subjectum.' The internal light of the mind in the saving illumination of the Holy Spirit, enabling us by that means, and in the use of it, spiritually to behold and discern the glory of God in the face of Christ; 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Through both these, in their several ways of operation, there proceedeth from the real object of our faith, Christ as the image of God, a transforming power, whereby the soul is changed into the same image, or is made conformable unto Christ, which is that whereunto we are predestinated. But we may yet a little farther contemplate on these things, in some instances wherein the glory of God and our own duty are concerned.

1. The glory of God's wisdom is exalted, and the pride

of the imaginations of men is proportionably debased. And in these two consists the real foundation of all religion in our souls. This God designed in the dispensation of himself and his will; 1 Cor. i. 29. 31. This he calls us unto, Isa. ii. 22. Zech. ii. 13. As this frame of heart is prevalent in us, so do all other graces shine and flourish. And it is that which influences all our duties, so far as they are acceptable unto God. And there is no truth more instructive unto it, than that before us. It is taken for granted, and the event hath demonstrated it to be so, that some express representation should be made of God unto us; wherein we might contemplate the glorious excellencies of his nature, and he might draw nigh unto us, and be present with us. This therefore men attempted to effect and accomplish, and this God alone hath performed and could so do. And their several ways for this end are herein manifest. As the way whereby God hath done it is the principal exaltation of his infinite wisdom and goodness, as shall be immediately more fully declared, so the way whereby men attempted it, was the highest instance of wickedness and folly. It is, as we have declared, in Christ alone that God hath done it. And that therein he hath exalted and manifested the riches, the treasures of his infinite wisdom and goodness, is that which the gospel, the Spirit, and the church, do give testimony unto. A more glorious effect of divine wisdom and goodness, a more illustrious manifestation of them, there never was, nor ever shall be, than in the finding out and constitution of this way of the representation of God unto us. The ways of men for the same end were so far from giving a right representation of the perfections of the divine nature, that they were all of them below, beneath, and unworthy of our own. For in nothing did the blindness, darkness, and folly of our nature, in its depraved condition, ever so exert and evidence themselves, as in contriving ways for the representation of God unto us, that is, in idolatry, the worst and vilest of evils. So Psal. cxv. 4—8. Isa. xliv. Rev. i. 19, 20, &c. This pride and folly of men, was that which lost all knowledge of God in the world, and all obedience unto him. The ten commandments are but a transcript of the light and law of nature. The first of these required that God, the only true God, the Creator and Governor of all, should be

acknowledged, worshipped, believed in, and obeyed. And the second was, that we should not make unto ourselves any image or representation of him. Whatever he would do himself, yet he strictly forbid that we should make any such unto ourselves. And here began the apostacy of the world from God. They did not absolutely reject him, and so cast off the first fundamental precept of the law of nature; but they submitted not unto his wisdom and authority in the next, which was evidently educed from it. They would make images and representations of him unto themselves: and by this invention of their own, they first dishonoured him, and then forsook him, giving themselves up unto the rule and service of the devil. Wherefore, as the way that God in infinite wisdom found out for the representation of himself unto us, was the only means of recovery from the first apostacy; the way found out by men unto the same end, was the great means of casting the generality of mankind unto the farthest degree of a new apostacy from God whereof our nature is capable. And of the same kind will all our contrivances in what belongs unto his worship and glory be found to be, though unto us they may appear both specious and necessary. This, therefore, should lead us into a continual admiration of the wisdom and grace of God, with a due sense of our own vileness and baseness by nature. For we are in nothing better or wiser than they, who fell into the utmost folly and wickedness, in their designs for the highest end, or the representation of God unto us. The more we dwell on such considerations, the more fear and reverence of God, with faith, trust, and delight in him, will be increased; as also humility in ourselves, with a sense of divine grace and love.

2. There is a peculiar ground of the spiritual efficacy of this representation of God. The revelation that he hath made of himself, and of the glorious properties of his nature in the works of creation and providence, are in themselves clear, plain, and manifest; Psal. xix. 1, 2. Rom. i. 21, 22. Those which are made in Christ are sublime and mysterious. Howbeit the knowledge we have of him as he is represented unto us in Christ, is far more clear, certain, steady, effectual, and operative, than any we can attain in and by all other ways of revelation. The reason hereof is, not only because

there is a more full and extensive revelation made of God, his counsels, and his will, in Christ and the gospel, than in all the works of creation and providence; but because this revelation and representation of God is received by faith alone, the other by reason only; and it is faith that is the principle of spiritual light and life in us. What is received thereby is operative and effectual unto all the ends of the life of God. For we live by faith here, as we shall by sight hereafter. Reason alone, especially as it is corrupted and depraved, can discern no glory in the representation of God by Christ. Yea, all that is spoken thereof, or declared in the gospel, is foolishness unto it. Hence many live in a profession of the faith of the letter of the gospel, yet having no light, guide, nor conduct, but that of reason, they do not, they cannot, really behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; nor hath the revelation of it any efficacy upon their souls. The manifestation of him in the light of nature by the works of creation and providence, is suited unto their reason, and doth affect it: for that which is made in Christ, they say of it, as the Israelites did of manna that come down from heaven, 'What is it? we know not the meaning of it.' For it is made unto faith alone, and all men have not faith. And where God shines into the heart, by that faith which is of divine operation, there with 'open face we behold the glory of God as in a glass;' or have the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. There is not the meanest believer, but in the real exercise of faith in Christ hath more glorious apprehensions of God, his wisdom, goodness, and grace, of all his glorious excellencies, than the most learned and wise in the world can attain unto, in the exercise of reason, on the proper objects of it. So are these things opposed by the apostle, 1 Cor. i. Wherefore faith in Christ is the only means of the true knowledge of God; and the discoveries which are made of him and his excellencies thereby, are those alone which are effectual to conform us unto his image and likeness. And this is the reason why some men are so little affected with the gospel, notwithstanding the continual preaching of it unto them, and their outward profession of it. It doth not inwardly affect them, it produceth no blessed effects in them. Some sense they have of the power of God in the works of crea-

tion and providence, in his rule and government, and in the workings of natural conscience. Beyond these, they have no real sense of him. The reason is, because they have not faith, whereby alone the representation that is made of God in Christ, and declared in the gospel, is made effectual unto the souls of men. Wherefore,

3. It is the highest degeneracy from the mystery of Christian religion, for men to satisfy themselves in natural discoveries of the Divine Being and excellencies, without an acquaintance with that perfect declaration and representation of them which is made in the person or Christ, as he is revealed and declared in the gospel. It is confessed that there may be good use made of the evidence which reason gives or takes from its own innate principles, with the consideration of the external works of divine wisdom and power, concerning the being and rule of God. But to rest herein, to esteem it the best and most perfective knowledge of God that we can attain, not to rise up unto the more full, perfect, and evident manifestation of himself that he hath made in Christ, is a declaration of our unbelief, and a virtual renunciation of the gospel. This is the spring of that declension unto a mere natural religion, which discovers itself in many, and usually ends in the express denial of the divine person of Christ. For when the proper use of it is despised, on what grounds can the notion of it be long retained? But a supposition of his divine person is the foundation of this discourse. Were he not the essential image of the Father in his own divine person, he could not be the representative image of God unto us, as he is incarnate. For if he were a man only, however miraculously produced and gloriously exalted, yet the angels above, the glorious heavens, the seat and throne of God, with other effects of creating power and wisdom, would no less represent his glory than it could be done in him. Yet are they nowhere jointly nor separately styled the 'image of the invisible God;' the 'brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;' nor doth God shine into our hearts to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of them. And it argues the woful enmity of the carnal mind against God, and all the effects of his wisdom, that whereas he hath granted us such a glorious image and representation of himself, we like

it not, we delight not in the contemplation of it, but either despise it, or neglect it, and please ourselves in that which is incomparably beneath it.

4. Because God is not thus known, it is that the knowledge of him is so barren and fruitless in the world, as it manifests itself to be. It were easy to produce, yea, endless to number, the testimonies that might be produced out of heathen writers, given unto the being and existence of God, his authority, monarchy, and rule: yet, what were the effects of that knowledge which they had; besides that wretched idolatry wherein they were all immersed? as the apostle declares, Rom. i. it rescued them from no kind of wickedness and villany, as he there also manifests. And the virtues which were found among them, were evidently derived from other causes, and not from the knowledge they had of God. The Jews have the knowledge of God by the letter of the Old Testament. But yet not knowing him in Christ, and having lost all sense and apprehension of those representations which were made of his being in him in the law, they continue universally a people carnal, obstinate, and wicked. They have neither the virtues of the heathens among them, nor the power of the truth of religion. As it was with them of old, so it yet continueth to be; 'they profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate;' Tit. i. 16. So is it among many that are called Christians at this day in the world. Great pretence there is unto the knowledge of God; yet did flagitious sins and wickedness scarce ever more abound among the heathens themselves. It is the knowledge of God in Christ alone that is effectually powerful to work the souls of men unto a conformity unto him. Those alone who behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

CHAP. VI.

The person of Christ the great repository of sacred truth. Its relation thereunto.

DIVINE supernatural truth is called by the apostle, the 'truth which is according to godliness;' Tit. i. 1. Whereas therefore the person of Christ is the great mystery of godliness, we must, in the next place, inquire what is the relation of spiritual supernatural truth thereunto. And this I shall do in pursuit of what was proposed in the foregoing chapter, namely, that he is the great representative unto the church of God, his holy properties, and the counsels of his will.

All divine truth may be referred unto two heads. First, that which is essentially so, and then that which is so declaratively. The first is God himself, the other are the counsel of his will.

First, God himself is the first and only essential truth, in whose being and nature the springs of all truth do lie. Whatever is truth, so far as it is so, derives from him; is an emanation from that eternal fountain of it. Being, truth, and goodness, is the principal notion of God, and in him they are all the same. How this is represented in Christ, as he is in himself the essential image of the Father, and as incarnate the representative image of him unto us, hath been declared.

Secondly, The counsels of God are the next spring and cause, as also the subject matter or substance of all truth, that is so declaratively. 'Divine truth is the declaration of the counsels of God;' Acts xx. 27. Of them all, the person of Christ is the sacred repository and treasury; in him are they to be learned. All their efficacy and use, depends on their relation unto him. He is the centre and circumference of all the lines of truth, that is, which is divine, spiritual, and supernatural. And the beauty of it is presented unto us only in his face or person. We see it not, we know it not, but as God shines into our hearts to give us the knowledge of it therein; 2 Cor. iv. 6.

So he testifieth of himself, 'I am the truth;' John xiv. 6. He is so essentially as he is one with the Father, the God of truth; Deut. xxxii. 4. He is so efficiently, as by him alone it is fully and effectually declared. 'For no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;' John i. 18. He is so substantially, in opposition unto the types and shadows of the Old Testament; for in him 'dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily;' Col. ii. 9. The body is of Christ; ver. 17. He is so subjectively; for all divine truth relating to the saving knowledge of God, is treasured up in him.

'In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;' Col. ii. 3. That is, the wisdom and knowledge of God in his counsels concerning the vocation, sanctification, and salvation of the church; concerning which the apostle falls into that holy admiration; 'O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God;' Rom. xi. 33. And they are called 'treasures' in a twofold account, both mentioned together by the psalmist. 'How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O Lord; how great is the sum of them!' They are treasures because precious and invaluable, and are therefore usually preferred above all earthly treasures which men most highly esteem; Prov. iii. 14, 15. and they are so, because of the greatness of the sum of them; and therefore also called 'unsearchable riches,' Eph. iii. 8. These precious unsearchable treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God, that is, all divine supernatural truths, are hid, or safely deposited in Christ, in and from whom alone they are to be learned and received.

So we are said to 'learn the truth as it is in Jesus;' Eph. iv. 21. And the knowledge of all evangelical sacred truth, is in the Scripture most frequently expressed by the knowledge of him; John viii. 19. xvii. 3. 2 Cor. ii. 14. iv. 5, 6. Eph. i. 17. Phil. iii. 8. 10. 1 John i. 1, 2. ii. 4. 13, 14. v. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 20.

Setting aside what we have discoursed and proved before concerning the laying of the foundation of all the counsels of God in the person of Christ, and the representation of them in the ineffable constitution thereof, I shall give some few instances of this relation of all supernatural truth unto

him; manifesting that we cannot learn them, nor know them, but with a due respect thereunto.

1. There are two things wherein the glory of truth doth consist. (1.) Its light. (2.) Its efficacy or power. And both these do all supernatural truths derive from this relation unto Christ.

(1.) No truth whatever brings any spiritual light unto the mind, but by virtue thereof. 'In him is life, and the life is the light of men;' John i. 4. He is the 'true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;' ver. 9. Wherefore as truth is the only means of illumination, so it cannot communicate any light unto the mind, but only as it is a beam from him, as it is an organ to convey it from that fountain. Separated from him and its relation unto him, it will not retain, it cannot communicate, any real spiritual light or understanding to the souls of men. How should it, if all light be originally in him, as the Scripture testifieth? Then alone is the mind irradiated with heavenly truth, when it is received as proceeding from, and leading unto, the Sun of righteousness, the blessed spring of all spiritual light, which is Christ himself. Whatever notional knowledge men may have of divine truths, as they are doctrinally proposed in the Scripture, yet, if they know them not in their respect unto the person of Christ as the foundation of the counsels of God; if they discern not how they proceed from him, and centre in him, they will bring no spiritual saving light unto their understanding. For all spiritual life and light is in him, and from him alone. An instance hereof we have in the Jews. They have the Scriptures of the Old Testament, wherein the substance of all divine truth is revealed and expressed. And they are diligent in the study of them. Howbeit their minds are not at all illuminated, nor irradiated by the truths contained in them, but they live and walk in horrible darkness. And the only reason hereof is, because they know not, because they reject the relation of them unto Christ, without which they are deprived of all enlightening power.

(2.) Efficacy or power is the second property of divine truth. And the end of this efficacy is to make us like unto God; Eph. iv. 20—24. The mortification of sin, the renova-

tion of our natures, the sanctification of our minds, hearts, and affections, the consolation of our souls, with their edification in all the parts of the life of God, and the like, are the things that God hath designed to effect by his truth; John xvii. 17. Whence it is able to 'build us up and give us an inheritance among all them that are sanctified;' Acts xx. 32. But it is from their relation unto the person of Christ, that they have any thing of this power and efficacy. For they have it no otherwise but as they are conveyances of his grace unto the souls of men. So 1 John i. 1, 2.

Wherefore, as professors of the truth, if separated from Christ as unto real union, are withering branches; so truths professed, if doctrinally separated from him, or their respect unto him, have no living power or efficacy in the souls of men. When Christ is formed in the heart by them, when he dwelleth plentifully in the soul through their operation, then, and not else, do they put forth their proper power and efficacy. Otherwise they are as waters separated from the fountain, they quickly dry up or become a noisome puddle; or as a beam interrupted from its continuity unto the sun, is immediately deprived of light.

2. All divine spiritual truths are declarative either of the grace and love of God unto us, or our duty, obedience, and gratitude unto him. But as unto these things Christ is all and in all; we can have no due apprehensions of the love and grace of God, no understanding of the divine truths of the word wherein they are revealed, and whereby they are exhibited unto them that believe, but in the exercise of faith on Christ himself. For in, by, and from him alone it is, that they are proposed unto us, that we are made partakers of them. It is from his fulness that all grace is received. No truth concerning them can by any imagination be separated from him. He is the life and soul of all such truths, without which, as they are written in the word, they are but a dead letter, and that of such a character as is illegible unto us as unto any real discovery of the grace and love of God. And as unto those of the other sort, which are instructive unto us in our duty, obedience, and gratitude, we cannot come unto a practical compliance with any one of them but by the aids of grace received from him. For 'without him we can do nothing;' John xv. 5. and he alone understands divine truth

who doth it; John vii. 17. There is not therefore any one text of Scripture which presseth our duty unto God that we can so understand as to perform that duty in an acceptable manner, without an actual regard unto Christ, from whom alone we receive ability for the performance of it, and in or through whom alone it is accepted with God.

3. All the evidence of divine spiritual truth, and all the foundation of our real interest in the things whereof it is a declaration as to benefit, advantage, and comfort, depends on their relation unto Christ. We may take an instance in one article of divine truth, which seems to be most disengaged from any such relation, namely, the resurrection of the dead. But there is no man who rightly believes or comprehends this truth, who doth it not upon the evidence given unto it, and example of it in the person of Christ rising from the dead. Nor can any man have a comfortable expectation or faith of an especial interest in a blessed resurrection (which is our whole concern in that truth, Phil. iii. 11.), but by virtue of a mystical union unto him as the head of the church that shall be raised unto glory. Both these the apostle insists upon at large, 1 Cor. xv. So is it with all other truths whatever.

Wherefore, all divine supernatural truths revealed in the Scripture, being nothing but the declaration of these counsels of God, whose foundation was laid in the person of Christ; and whereas they are all of them expressive of the love, wisdom, goodness, and grace of God unto us, or instructive in our obedience and duty to him; all the actings of God towards us, and all ours towards him, being in and through him alone; and whereas all the life and power of these truths, all their beauty, symmetry, and harmony in their union and conjunction, which is expressive of divine wisdom, is all from him, who as a living Spirit diffused through the whole system both acts and animates it, all the treasures of truth, wisdom, and knowledge may be well said to be hid in him. And we may consider some things that ensue hereon.

1. Hence it is that those who reject the divine person of Christ, who believe it not, who discern not the wisdom, grace, love, and power of God therein, do constantly reject or corrupt all other spiritual truths of divine revelation; nor

can it otherwise be. For they have a consistency only in their relation unto the mystery of godliness, 'God manifest in the flesh;' and from thence derive their sense and meaning. This being removed, the truth in all other articles of religion immediately falls to the ground. An instance hereof we have in the Socinians. For although they retain the common notions of the unity and existence of the divine nature, which are indelibly fixed on the minds of men, yet is there no one truth that belongs peculiarly unto Christian religion, but they either deny it, or horribly deprave it. Many things concerning God and his essential properties; as his immutability, immensity, prescience, they have greatly perverted. So is that fulfilled in them which was spoken by Jude the apostle, ver. 10. 'They speak evil of the things which they know not, and what they do know naturally as brute beasts, in them they corrupt themselves.' So they do in the things mentioned, whereof there are natural notions in the minds of men. But of evangelical truths, which they know not, they speak evil, and deride them. The holy Trinity they blaspheme; the incarnation of the Son of God they scorn; the work of his mediation in his oblation and intercession, with the satisfaction and merit of his obedience and suffering they reject. So do they whatever we are taught of the depravation of our natures by the fall, of the renovation of them by the Holy Ghost, and unto all other articles of our faith do they offer violence to corrupt them. The beginning of their transgression or apostacy is in a disbelief of the divine person of Christ. That being rejected, all other sacred truths are removed from their basis and centre; that which gives them their unity and harmony. Hereon they fluctuate up and down in the minds of men, and appearing unto them under various deceiving colours, are easily misapprehended or disbelieved. Yea, there can no direct proper representation be made of them unto the understandings of men. Dissolve the knot, centre, and harmony in the most beautiful composition or structure, and every part will contribute as much unto the deformity and ruin of the whole, as it did before unto its beauty and consistency. So is it with every doctrine, so is it with the whole system of evangelical truths. Take the person of Christ out of them, dissolve their harmony in relation thereunto, whereby we no

longer hold the head in the faith and profession of them, and the minds of men cannot deliver them from an irreconcilable difference among themselves. Hereon some of them are immediately rejected, and some of them corrupted; for they lose their native light and beauty. They will neither agree nor consist any where but in Christ. Hence it is, that no instance can be given of any, who from the original of Christian religion, rejected the divine person of Christ, and preserved any one evangelical truth besides pure and uncorrupted. And I do freely confess, that all which we believe concerning the holy Trinity, the eternal counsels of God, the efficacy of the mediation of Christ, his satisfaction and merit, the way which we own of the sanctification, justification, and salvation of the church, are to be esteemed fables, as the Socinians contend, if what we believe concerning the person of Christ, be so also.

2. Hence it is that the knowledge and profession of the truth with many is so fruitless, inefficacious, and useless. It is not known, it is not understood nor believed in its relation unto Christ, on which account alone it conveys either light or power to the soul. Men profess they know the truth, but they know it not in its proper order, in its harmony and use. It leads them not to Christ, it brings not Christ unto them, and so is lifeless and useless. Hence, oft-times none are more estranged from the life of God, than such as have much notional knowledge of the doctrines of the Scripture. For they are all of them useless and subject to be abused, if they are not improved to form Christ in the soul; and transform the whole person into his likeness and image. This they will not effect where their relation unto him is not understood, where they are not received and learned as a revelation of him, with the mystery of the will and wisdom of God in him. For whereas he is our life, and in our living unto God we do not so much live as he liveth in us, and the life which we lead in the flesh is by the faith of him, so that we have neither principle nor power of spiritual life but in, by, and from him; whatever knowledge we have of the truth, if it do not effect a union between him and our souls, it will be lifeless in us, and unprofitable unto us. It is 'learning the truth as it is in Jesus,' which alone reneweth the image of God in us; Eph. iv. 21—24. Where it is otherwise, where

men have notions of evangelical truths, but know not Christ in them, whatever they profess, when they come really to examine themselves, they will find them of no use unto them, but that all things between God and their souls are stated on natural light and common presumptions.

CHAP. VII.

Power and efficacy communicated unto the office of Christ for the salvation of the church from his person.

It is by the exercise and discharge of the office of Christ as the king, priest, and prophet of the church, that we are redeemed, sanctified, and saved. Thereby doth he immediately communicate all gospel benefits unto us, gives us an access unto God here by grace, and in glory hereafter. For he saves us as he is the mediator between God and man. But hereon an inquiry may be made, whence it is that the acts and duties of this office of Christ in their exercise and discharge, should have such a power and efficacy with respect unto their supernatural and eternal ends. For the things which depend upon them, which are effected by them, are all the principal means of the glory of God, and the only concernments of the souls of men. And this, I say, is his holy, mysterious person; from thence alone all power and efficacy is derived and transfused into his offices, and into all that is due in the discharge of them.

A truth this is of that importance, that the declaration and demonstration of it, is the principal design of one entire book of the holy Scriptures; namely, of the Epistle of Paul the apostle unto the Hebrews. That the glorious excellency of the person of Christ doth enable him in the discharge of his offices to accomplish those ends which none other, though vested with the same offices, could in the exercise of them attain unto, is the sum and substance of the doctrinal part of that discourse. Here, therefore, we must a little fix our meditations; and our interest calls us thereunto. For if it be so, it is evident that we can receive no good, no benefit, by virtue of any office of Christ, nor any fruits of their

exercise, without an actual respect of faith unto his person, whence all their life and power is derived.

God gave of old both kings, priests, and prophets, unto the church. He both anointed them unto their offices, directed them in their discharge, was present with them in their work, and accepted of their duties; yet by none of them, nor by all of them together, was the church supernaturally enlightened, internally ruled, or eternally saved, nor could it so be. Some of them, as Moses in particular, had as much power, and as great a presence of God with him, as any mere man could be made partaker of; yet was he not in his ministry the saviour of the church, nor could he be so any otherwise than typically and temporally. The ministry of them all was subservient unto that end, which by its own power it could not attain.

It is evident, therefore, that the redemption and salvation of the church do not depend merely on this, that God hath given one to be the king, priest, and prophet of the church, by the actings of which offices it is redeemed and saved; but on the person of him who was so given unto us, as is fully attested, Isa. ix. 6—8.

This must be declared.

Two things were required in general unto the person of Christ, that his offices might be effectual unto the salvation of the church; and without them they could not so have been. And they are such as that their contrivance in the constitution of one and the same person, no created wisdom could reach unto. Wherefore, the infinite wisdom of God is most gloriously manifested therein.

1. The first of these is that he should have a nature provided for him, which originally was not his own. For in his divine nature singly considered, he had no such relation unto them for whom he was to discharge his offices, as was necessary to communicate the benefit of them, nor could he discharge their principal duties. God could not die, nor rise again, nor be exalted to be a prince and a saviour in his divine nature. Nor was there that especial alliance between it and ours, as should give us an especial interest in what was done thereby.

It was mankind in whose behalf he was to exercise these offices. He was not to bear them immediately with respect

unto the angels, and therefore, he took not their nature on him; Heb. ii. 16. οὐ γὰρ δήπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται, 'He took not the nature of angels unto him,' because he was not to be a mediator for them, a saviour unto them. Those of them who had sinned were left unto everlasting ruin; and those who retained their original righteousness, needed no redemption. But God prepared a body for him; that is, a human nature, Heb. x. 5. The promise hereof, namely, that he should be of the seed of the woman, was the foundation of the church; that is, he was made so unto the church in and by that promise; Gen. iii. 15. In the accomplishment thereof he was 'made of a woman,' that so he might be 'made under the law,' Gal. iv. 4. 'And took upon him the seed of Abraham,' Heb. ii. 16. 'For because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same,' ver. 14. 'For in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God;' ver. 17. And this was absolutely necessary unto the discharge of his offices, on the twofold account before-mentioned. For,

(1.) Those acts of his offices whereon the sanctification and salvation of the church do principally depend, could not be performed but in and by that nature. Therein alone could he yield obedience unto the law that it might be fulfilled in us, without which we could not stand in judgment before God, see Rom. viii. 3. x. 3, 4. Therein alone could he undergo the curse of the law, or be made a curse for us, that the blessing might come upon us; Gal. iii. 13, 14. It was necessary that as a priest he should have something of his own to offer unto God, to make atonement for sin; Heb. viii. 3. The like may be said of his whole ministry on the earth, of all the effects of his incarnation.

(2.) Herein that cognation and alliance between him and the church, which were necessary to entitle it unto a participation of the benefits of his mediation, do depend. For hereby he became our *goel*, the next of kin, unto whom belonged the right of redemption, and from whom alone we could claim relief and succour in our lost condition. This is divinely and at large declared by the apostle, Heb. ii. 10—18. Having at large explained this context in our exposition of that chapter, and therein declared both the ne-

cessity and benefit of the cognation between the church and its high-priest, I shall not here farther insist upon it. See to the same purpose, Eph. v. 25—27. Wherefore, had he not been partaker of our nature, we could have received no benefit, not that without which we must eternally perish, by any office that he could have undertaken. This, therefore, was necessary unto the constitution of his person with respect unto his offices. But,

2. There was yet more required thereunto, or to render his offices effectual unto their proper ends. Not one of them could have been so had he been no more than a man, had he had no nature but ours. This I shall particularly demonstrate, considering them in their usual distribution, unto the glory of his divine person, and our own edification in believing.

(1.) He could not have been the great and singular prophet of the church, had he been a man only, though never so excellent and glorious, and that for these three reasons.

[1.] He was to be the prophet of the whole Catholic church, that is, of all the elect of God, of all that shall be saved in all ages and places, from the beginning of the world unto the end thereof. He had a personal ministry for the instruction of the church whilst he was on the earth, but his prophetical office was not confined thereunto. For that was limited unto one nation; Matt. xv. 24. Rom. xv. 8. and was for a short season only. But the church was never without a prophet; that is, one on whom it was incumbent to reveal unto it, and instruct it in the will of God, nor can be so unto the consummation of all things. This is Christ alone. For,

1st. I take it for granted, that from the beginning, from the giving of the first promise, the Son of God did in an especial manner undertake the care of the church as unto all the ends of the wisdom, will, and grace of God. And I take it for granted here, because I have proved it at large elsewhere. It evidently followeth on the eternal compact between the Father and him unto this end. In the work which belonged hereunto, that which concerned its instruction in the will of God, its saving illumination and spiritual wisdom, is of such importance as that without it, none can be partaker of any other blessings whatever. In this instruc-

tion and illumination consists the discharge of the prophetical office of Christ.

2dly. Upon the account of his susception of his office even before his incarnation, considered as God, he is said to act in it so as to be sent of God unto his work; Micah v. 2. 'The ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' His goings forth are not his eternal generation, which consists in one individual, eternal act of the Father; but it is the egress, the exercise of his power and care for the church, that is so expressed. These were from the beginning, the first foundation of the church, in answer unto his everlasting counsels; Zech. ii. 8, 9. 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations that spoiled you: and I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants, and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me.' He who is sent calleth himself the 'Lord of hosts,' and affirms that he will destroy the nations by the shaking of his hand, who can be no other but God himself. That is, it was the Son of God who was to be incarnate, as is declared in the next words: 'Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Sion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined unto the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee;' ver. 10, 11. He promiseth that he will dwell in the midst of the people, which was accomplished when the 'Word was made flesh and dwelt among us;' John i. 14. which was the time of the calling of the Gentiles, when many nations were to be joined unto the Lord; and those that were so called, were to be his people; 'They shall be my people.' And yet in all this he was sent by the Lord of hosts; 'Thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee.' Wherefore, with respect unto his susception of his offices towards the church, the Lord of hosts in the person of the Son, is said to be sent by the Lord of hosts; that is, in the person of the Father. So was he the prophet of the church even before his incarnation, sent or designed by the Father to instruct it, to communicate spiritual and saving light unto it. So he testified concerning himself unto the Jews, 'Before Abraham was, I am;' John viii. 58. Which,

as it invincibly proves his eternal pre-existence unto his incarnation, so it is not only intended. He was so before Abraham, as that the care of the church was then and always from the beginning on him. And he discharged this office four ways.

(1st.) By personal appearances in the likeness of human nature, in the shape of a man as an indication of his future incarnation; and under those appearances instructing the church. So he appeared unto Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, to Joshua, as I have proved elsewhere. And those peculiar appearances of the person of the Son for the instruction of believers, are a full demonstration that the care and work of it were committed unto him in a peculiar manner. And I am not without thoughts, although I see some difficulty in it, that the whole Old Testament, wherein God perpetually treats with men, by an assumption of human affections unto himself, so to draw us with the cords of a man, proceeded from the person of the Son, in a preparation for, and prospect of, his future incarnation.

(2dly.) By the ministry of angels. Upon his undertaking to be the mediator for the church with God, the angels were in a peculiar manner put into dependance on him, even as he became a new and immediate head unto the whole creation. This belonged unto that especial glory which he had with the Father 'before the world was,' whereof we have treated before. All things were to be anew gathered into a head in him, 'both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;' Eph. i. 10. And he became the 'first-born of every creature;' Col. i. 15. the Lord and proprietor of them. Hence the whole ministry of angels was subordinate unto him; and whatever instruction was thereby given unto the church in the mind and will of God, it was immediately from him, as the great prophet of the church.

(3dly.) By sending his Holy Spirit to inspire, act, and guide the prophets, by whom God would reveal himself. God spake unto them by the 'mouth of his holy prophets from the beginning of the world; Luke i. 70. But it was the Spirit of Christ that was in them, that spake by them, that revealed the things which concerned the redemption and salvation of the church; 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. And by this Spirit he himself 'preached unto those that were disobedient

in the days of Noah,' who are now in prison for their disobedience; 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. For he was so the prophet of the church always as to tender manifold instructions unto the perishing, unbelieving world. Hence is he said to 'lighten every man that cometh into the world;' John i. 9. by one way or other communicating to them some notices of God and his will: for his light shineth in, or irradiates darkness itself; that darkness which is come on the minds of men by sin, though the 'darkness comprehend in not;' ver. 5.

(4thly.) By the ministry of holy men, acted and moved by his Spirit. So he gave forth the word that was written for an everlasting rule of faith and obedience unto the church.

Thus were the office and work of instructing and illuminating of the church on his hand alone from the beginning, and thus were they by him discharged. This was not a work for him who was no more but a man. His human nature had no existence until the fulness of time, the latter days, and therefore could effect or operate nothing before. And whereas the apostle distinguisheth between the speaking of God in the Son, and his speaking in the prophets, opposing the one to the other; Heb. i. 1, 2. he doth it with respect unto his personal ministry unto the church of the Jews, and not with respect unto his being the peculiar fountain of life and light unto the whole church in all ages.

It is true, we have under the gospel many unspeakable advantages from the prophetical office of Christ, above what they enjoyed under the Old Testament; but he was the prophet of the church equally in all ages. Only he hath given out the knowledge of the mind of God in different degrees and measures; that which was most perfect, being for many reasons reserved unto the times of the gospel; the sum whereof is, that God designed him unto a pre-eminence above all in his own personal ministry.

If any shall now inquire how the Lord Christ could be the prophet of the church before he took our nature on him and dwelt among us; I shall also ask how they suppose him to be the prophet of the church, now he hath left the world and is gone to heaven; so as that we neither see him, nor hear him any more? If they shall say that he is so by his Spirit, his word, and the ministry which he hath ordained; I

say, so was he the prophet of the church before his incarnation also. To confine the offices of Christ, as unto their virtue, power and efficacy, unto the times of the gospel only, is utterly to evacuate the first promise, with the covenant of grace founded thereon. And their minds are secretly influenced by a disbelief of his divine person, who suppose that the respect of the church unto Christ in faith, love, trust, and instruction, commenceth from the date of his incarnation.

[2.] The full comprehension of the mind and will of God, of the whole divine counsel concerning his glory in the sanctification and salvation of the church, could not at once reside in the mind of any mere creature. Yet was this necessary unto him who was to be the prophet of the church, that is, the fountain of truth, life, and knowledge unto it. Hence is his name 'Wonderful, Counsellor,' as he who was participant of all the eternal counsels of God; whereon in him as incarnate all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge were hid; Col. ii. 3. In him this could be alone, in whom was life, and the 'life was the light of men;' John i. 4. God did reveal his mind and will by angels and men. But as he did it at sundry times, so he did it by several parts, or various parcels, not only as the church was fit to receive it, but as they were able to communicate it. The whole of the divine counsels could not be comprehended, and so not declared by any of them. Hence the angels themselves, notwithstanding their residence in the presence of God beholding his face, and all the glorious messages wherein they were employed, learned more of his mind after the personal ministry of Christ, and the revelation of the mysteries of his counsel therein, than ever they knew before; Eph. iii. 8, 9. 11. 1 Pet. i. 13. And on the account of their imperfection in the comprehension of his counsels, it is said, that 'he chargeth his angels with folly;' Job iv. 15. And the best of the prophets not only received divine truth by parcels, but comprehended not the depths of the revelations made unto them; 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

To this purpose is that divine testimony, John i. 18. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' It is of all the prophets concerning whom it is affirmed, that no

man hath seen God at any time. So is it evident in the antithesis between Moses the principal of them, and the Lord Christ in the verse foregoing. 'For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' Wherefore no man, no other man or prophet whatever, hath seen God at any time; that is, had a perfect comprehension of his counsels, his mind and will, as they were to be declared unto the church. This is the privilege of the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; not only as being his eternal delight and love, but also as one acquainted with all his secret counsels, as his fellow and participant of all his bosom thoughts.

He says, that 'all that ever came before him were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them;' John x. 5. This some of old impiously applied unto the prophets of the Old Testament; whereas he intended it only of those false prophets who pretended of themselves that they, any of them, were the Messiah the great Shepherd of the sheep, whom his elect sheep would not attend unto. But it is true that all who went before him, neither separately nor jointly had the knowledge of God, so as to declare him fully unto the church.

It is the most fond and wicked imagination of the Socinians, invented to countenance their disbelief and hatred of his divine person, that during the time of his flesh he was taken up into heaven and there taught the doctrine of the gospel, as Mahomet feigned concerning himself and his Alcoran. The reason and foundation of his perfect knowledge of God was his being the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father; and not a fictitious rapture of his human nature.

To this purpose have we his own testimony, John iii. 13. 'And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.' The matter whereof he treats is the revelation of heavenly things. For finding Nicodemus slow in the understanding of the doctrine and necessity of regeneration, which yet was plain and evident in comparison of some other heavenly mysteries, he asks of him, 'If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not' (things wrought in the earth and in your own breasts), 'how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things;' if I declare unto you the deep counsels of

the will of God above? ver. 12. But hereon a question might arise, how he should himself come to the knowledge of these heavenly things whereof they had never heard before, and which no other man could tell them of, especially considering what he had said before, ver. 11. 'We speak that we do know, and testify what we have seen.' Hereof he gives an account in these words. Wherefore, the ascending into heaven, which he denies unto all men whatever, 'no man hath ascended up to heaven,' is an entrance into all the divine, heavenly counsels of God; no man either hath or ever had a full comprehension of these heavenly things but he himself alone. And unto him it is ascribed on a double account: first, That he came down from heaven; secondly, That when he did so, he yet still continued in heaven; which two properties give us such a description of the person of Christ, as declare him a full possessor of all the counsels of God. He descended from heaven in his incarnation, whereby he became the Son of man; and he is and was then in heaven in the essence and glory of his divine nature. This is the full of what we assert. In the knowledge and revelation of heavenly mysteries unto the calling, sanctification, and salvation of the church, doth the prophetical office of Christ consist. This he positively affirms could not otherwise be, but that he who came down from heaven, was also at the same instant in heaven. This is that glorious person whereof we speak. He who being always in heaven in the glory and essence of his divine nature, came down from heaven, not locally by a mutation of his residence, but by dispensation in the assumption of our nature into personal union with himself; he alone is meet and able to be the prophet of the church in the revelation of the heavenly mysteries of the counsels of the will of God. 'In him alone were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;' Col. ii. 3. Because in him alone 'dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily;' ver. 9.

I do not hereby ascribe the infusion of omniscience, of infinite understanding, wisdom, and knowledge into the human nature of Christ. It was and is a creature finite and limited, nor is a capable subject of properties absolutely infinite and immense. Filled it was with light and wisdom to the utmost capacity of a creature. But it was so, not by

being changed into a divine nature or essence, but by the communication of the Spirit unto it without measure. The Spirit of the Lord did rest upon him, 'the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord, and made him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord;' Isa. xi. 2, 3.

[3.] The Spirit of God dwelling in him in all the fulness of his graces and gifts, gave him an understanding peculiar unto himself; as above that of all creatures, so beneath the essential omniscience of the divine nature. Hence some things, as he was a man he knew not, Mark xiii. 32. but as they were given him by revelation; Rev. i. 1. But he is the prophet of the church in his whole entire person, and revealed the counsel of God, as he was in heaven in the bosom of the Father. Cursed be he that trusteth in man, that maketh flesh his arm, as to the revelations of the counsels of God. Here lies the safety, the security, the glory of the church. How deplorable is the darkness of mankind in their ignorance of God and heavenly things? In what ways of vanity and misery have the generality of them wandered ever since our first apostacy from God? Nothing but hell is more full of horror and confusion, than the minds and ways of men destitute of heavenly light. How miserably did those among them who boasted themselves to be wise, wax foolish in their imaginations? How wofully did all their inquiries after the nature and will of God, their own state, duty, and happiness, issue in curiosity, uncertainty, vanity, and falsehood? He who is infinitely good and compassionate, did from the beginning give some relief in this woful state by such parcels of divine revelations as he thought meet to communicate unto them by the prophets of old, such as they were able to receive. By them he set up a light shining in a dark place, as the light of stars in the night. But it was the rising of the sun of righteousness alone that dispelled the darkness that was on the earth, the thick darkness that was on the people, bringing life and immortality to light by the gospel. The divine person of the Son of God, in whom were all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath now made known all things unto the church, giving us the per-

fect idea and certainty of all sacred truth, and the full assurance of things invisible and eternal.

Three things are necessary that we may have the benefit and comfort of divine light or truth. 1st. The fulness of its revelation. 2dly. The infallibility of it. And, 3dly. The authority from whence it doth proceed. If either of these be wanting, we cannot attain unto stability and assurance in the faith of it, or obedience unto it.

1st. Full it must be, to free us from all attempts of fear that any thing is detained or hidden from us, that were needful for us to know. Without this the mind of man can never come to rest in the knowledge of truth. All that he knows may be useless unto him, for the want of that which he neither doth nor can know, because not revealed.

2dly. And it must be infallible also. For this divine truth whereof we treat, being concerning things unseen, heavenly, eternal mysteries, transcending the reach of human reason, nothing but the absolute infallibility of the revealer can bring the mind of man to assurance and acquiescency. And whereas the same truth enjoins unto us duties, many of them contrary unto our inclinations, and cross unto our several interests, the great guides of corrupted nature; the revelation of it must proceed from sovereign authority, that the will may comply with the mind in the embracement of it. All these are absolutely secured in the divine person of the great prophet of the church. His infinite wisdom, his infinite goodness, his essential veracity, his sovereign authority over all, give the highest assurance whereof a created understanding is capable, that nothing is detained from us, that there is no possibility of error or mistake in what is declared unto us, nor any pretence left of declining obedience unto the commands of the truth that we do receive. This gives the soul assured rest and peace in the belief of things which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can enter into the heart of man to conceive.' Upon the assurance of this truth alone can it with joy prefer things invisible and eternal above all present satisfactions and desires. In the persuasion hereof can it forego the best of present enjoyments, and undergo the worst of present evils; namely, in the experience of its present efficacy, and choice of that future recompense, which it doth secure.

And he believes not the gospel unto his own advantage, or the glory of God, whose faith rests not in the divine person of Jesus Christ, the great prophet of the church. And he who there finds rest unto his soul, dares not admit of any copartners with him as to instruction in the mind of God.

3dly. It was requisite unto the office of this great prophet of the church, and the discharge thereof, that he should have power and authority to send the Holy Spirit to make his revelations of divine truth effectual unto the minds of men. For the church which he was to instruct, was not only in darkness by reason of ignorance, and want of objective light or divine revelations, but was incapacitated to receive spiritual things in a due manner when revealed. Wherefore, it was the work of this prophet, not only to make known and declare the doctrines of truth, which are our external directive light, but also to irradiate and illuminate our minds, so that we might savingly apprehend them. And it is no wonder if those who are otherwise minded, who suppose themselves able to receive spiritual things, the things of God, in a due manner, upon their external proposal unto them, are regardless of the divine person of Christ as the prophet of the church. But hereon they will never have experience of the life and power of the doctrine of the gospel, if the apostle is to be believed; 1 Cor. ii. 9—12. Now this internal illumination of the minds of men unto the acknowledgment of the truth, can be wrought in them only by the Holy Spirit of God; Eph. i. 17—19. 2 Cor. iii. 18. None therefore could be the prophet of the church, but he who had the power to send the Holy Spirit to enable it to receive his doctrine by the saving illumination of the minds of men. And this alone he could do, whose Spirit he is, proceeding from him, whom he therefore frequently promised so to send.

Without a respect unto these things, we cannot really be made partakers of the saving benefits and fruits of the prophetical office of Christ. And this we can have only in the exercise of faith on his divine person, which is the eternal spring from whence this office derives all life and efficacy.

The command of God in respect unto him as the prophet of the church, is, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am

well pleased, hear him.' Unless we actually regard him by faith as the only-begotten Son of God, we can perform no duty aright in the hearing of him, nor shall we learn the truth as we ought. Hence it is that those who deny his divine person, though they pretend to attend unto him as the teacher of the church, do yet learn no truth from him, but embrace pernicious errors in the stead thereof. So it is with the Socinians, and all that follow them. For whereas they scarcely own any other office of Christ but his prophetical, looking on him as a man sent to teach the mind of God, and to confirm his doctrine by his sufferings, whereon he was afterward highly exalted of God, they learn nothing from him in a due manner.

But this respect unto the person of Christ is that which will ingenerate in us all those holy qualifications that are necessary to enable us to know the mind and will of God. For hence do reverence, humility, faith, delight, and assurance arise and flow, without whose continual exercise, in vain shall men hope to learn the will of God by the utmost of their endeavours. And the want of these things is the cause of much of that lifeless, unsanctified knowledge of the doctrine of the gospel, which is amongst many. They learn not the truth from Christ, so as to expect all teachings from his divine power. Hence they never come to know it either in its native beauty drawing the soul into the love and delight of what they know, nor in its transforming efficacy changing the mind into its own image and likeness.

(2.) The same also is the state of things with respect unto his kingly office and power. But this I have at large treated on elsewhere, and that much unto the same purpose; namely, in the exposition of the third verse of the first chapter of the Epistle unto the Hebrews. Wherefore, I shall not here enlarge upon it.

Some seem to imagine, that the kingly power of Christ towards the church, consists only in external rule by the gospel and the laws thereof, requiring obedience unto the officers and rulers that he hath appointed therein. It is true, that this also belongs unto his kingly power and rule; but to suppose that it consisteth solely therein, is an ebullition from the poisonous fountain of the denial of his divine person. For if he be not God over all, whatever in words may

be pretended or ascribed unto him, he is capable of no other rule or power. But indeed no one act of his kingly office can be aright conceived or acknowledged, without a respect had unto his divine person. I shall instance only unto this purpose in two things in general.

[1.] The extent of his power and rule gives evidence hereunto. It is over the whole creation of God. 'All power is given him in heaven and earth;' Matt. xxviii. 18. 'All things are put under his feet, he only excepted who put all things under him;' 1 Cor. xv. 27. And he is made 'head over all things unto the church;' Eph. i. 22. Not only those who are above the rule of external law, as the holy angels; and those who have cast off all such rule, as the devils themselves; but all things that in their own nature are not capable of obedience to an external law or rule, as the whole inanimate creation, heaven, and earth, and the sea, with all things in them and under them, Phil. ii. 10. with the dead bodies of men which he shall raise at the last day.

For this power over the whole creation is not only a moral right to rule and govern it; but it is also accompanied with virtue, force, or almighty power to act, order, and dispose of it at his pleasure. So is it described by the apostle from the psalmist, Heb. i. 10—12. 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest: and they shall all wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shall thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.' That power is required unto his kingly office, whereby he created all things in the beginning; and shall change them all as a man folds up a vesture, in the end. Omnipotency, accompanied with eternity and immutability, are required hereunto.

It is a vain imagination to suppose that this power can reside in a mere creature, however glorified and exalted. All essential divine properties are concurrent with it, and inseparable from it. And where are the properties of God, there is the nature of God; for his being and his properties are one and the same.

If the Lord Christ as king of the church be only a mere man, and be as such only to be considered, however he may

opened unto his eyes;' Heb. iv. 13. And he says of himself, that he 'searcheth,' that is, knoweth the 'hearts and reins of men;' Rev. ii. 23. And if these things are not the peculiar properties of the divine nature, I know nothing that may be so esteemed.

2dly. There is required hereunto, an influence of power into all the actings of the souls of believers; an intimate, efficacious operation with them in every duty, and under every temptation. These all of them, do look for, expect, and receive from him, as the king and head of the church. This also is an effect of divine and infinite power. And to deny these things unto the Lord Christ, is to rase the foundation of Christian religion. Neither faith in, nor love unto him, nor dependance on him, nor obedience unto his authority, can be preserved one moment, without a persuasion of his immediate intuition and inspection into the hearts, minds, and thoughts of all men, with a real influence into all the actings of the life of God in all them that believe. And the want of the faith hereof, is that which hath disjoined the minds of many from adherence unto him; and hath produced a lifeless carcase of Christian religion, instead of the saving power thereof.

(3.) The same may be said concerning his sacerdotal office, and all the acts of it. It was in and by the human nature that he offered himself a sacrifice for us. He had somewhat of his own to offer; Heb. viii. 3. and to this end a 'body was prepared for him;' chap. x. 5. But it was not the work of a man by one offering, and that of himself, to expiate the sins of the whole church, and for ever to perfect them that are sanctified, which he did; Heb. x. 14. 'God was to purchase his church with his own blood;' Acts xx. 28. But this also I have spoken to at large elsewhere.

This is the sum of what we plead for. We can have no due consideration of the offices of Christ, can receive no benefit by them, nor perform any act of duty with respect unto them, or any of them, unless faith in his divine person be actually exercised as the foundation of the whole. For that is it whence all their glory, power, and efficacy are derived. Whatever therefore we do with respect unto his rule, whatever we receive by the communication of his Spirit and grace, whatever we learn from his word by the teachings of

his Spirit, whatever benefit we believe, expect, and receive by his sacrifice and intercession on our behalf; our faith in them all, and concerning them all, is terminated on his divine person. The church is saved by his offices, because they are his. This is the substance of the testimony given concerning him, by God even the Father, 1 John v. 10, 11. 'This is the witness that God hath testified concerning his Son, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' Eternal life is given unto us, as it was wrought out and procured by the mediation of Christ on our behalf. But yet in him it was originally, and from him do we receive it in the discharge of his office; for this life is in the Son of God.

Hence it is that all those by whom the divine person of Christ is denied, are forced to give such a description of his offices, as that it is utterly impossible that the church should be saved by the discharge of them.

CHAP. VIII.

The faith of the church under the Old Testament in and concerning the person of Christ.

A brief view of the faith of the church under the Old Testament concerning the divine person of Christ, shall close these discourses, and make way for those that ensue, wherein our own duty with respect thereunto shall be declared.

That the faith of all believers from the foundation of the world had a respect unto him, I shall afterward demonstrate; and to deny it, is to renounce both the Old Testament and the New. But that this faith of theirs did principally respect his person, is what shall here be declared. Therein they knew was laid the foundation of the counsels of God for their deliverance, sanctification, and salvation. Otherwise it was but little they clearly understood of his office, or the way whereby he would redeem the church.

The apostle Peter, in the confession he made of him, Matt. xvi. 16. exceeded the faith of the Old Testament in

this, that he applied the promise concerning the Messiah, unto that individual person. 'Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.' He that was to be the Redeemer and Saviour of the church. Howbeit Peter then knew littleof the way and manner whereby he was principally so to be. And therefore, when he began to declare them unto his disciples, namely, that they should be by his death and sufferings, he in particular was not able to comply with it, but saith he, 'Master, that be far from thee;' ver. 32. 'As flesh and blood,' that is, his own reason and understanding did not reveal or declare him unto Peter to be the Christ the Son of the living God, but the Father which is in heaven; so he stood in need of fresh assistance from the same Almighty hand to believe that he should redeem and save his church by his death. And therefore he did refuse the external revelation and proposition of it, though made by Christ himself, until he received internal aid from above. And to suppose that we have faith now in Christ or his death, on any other terms, is an evidence that we have no faith at all.

Wherefore, the faith of the saints under the Old Testament did principally respect the person of Christ, both what it was, and what it was to be in the fulness of time, when he was to become the seed of the woman. What his especial work was to be, and the mystery of the redemption of the church thereby, they referred unto his own wisdom and grace; only they believed that by him they should be saved from the hand of all their enemies, or all the evil that befel them on the account of the first sin and apostacy from God.

God gave them indeed representations and prefigurations of his office and work also. He did so by the high-priest of the law, the tabernacle, with all the sacrifices and services thereunto belonging. All that Moses did as a faithful servant in the house of God, was but a 'testimony of those things which were afterward to be declared;' Heb. iii. 5. Howbeit the apostle tells us that all those things had but a 'shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things themselves;' Heb. x. 1. And although they are now to us full of light and instruction, evidently expressing the principal works of Christ's mediation; yet were they not so unto them. For the veil is now taken off from

them in their accomplishment, and a declaration is made of the counsels of God in them by the gospel. The meanest believer may now find out more of the work of Christ in the types of the Old Testament, than any prophets or wise men could have done of old. Therefore they always earnestly longed for their accomplishment; that the day might break, and the shadows fly away by the rising of the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings. But as unto his person, they had glorious revelations concerning it, and their faith in him was the life of all their obedience.

The first promise which established a new intercourse between God and man was concerning his incarnation, that he 'should be the seed of the woman;' Gen. iii. 15. that is, that the Son of God should be 'made of a woman, made under the law;' Gal. iv. 4. From the giving of that promise the faith of the whole church was fixed on him, whom God would send in our nature, to redeem and save them. Other way of acceptance with him there was none provided, none declared, but only by faith in this promise. The design of God in this promise, which was to reveal and propose the only way which in his wisdom and grace he had prepared for the deliverance of mankind from the state of sin and apostacy whereunto they were cast, with the nature of the faith and obedience of the church, will not admit of any other way of salvation, but only faith in him who was thus promised to be a Saviour. To suppose that men might fall off from faith in God by the revelation of himself in this promise, and yet be saved by attending to instructions given by the works of creation and providence, is an imagination that will no longer possess the minds of men, than whilst they are ignorant of, or do forget, what it is to believe and to be saved.

The great promise made unto Abraham was, that he should take his seed upon him, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; Gen. xii. 3. xv. 18. xxii. 18. which promise is explained by the apostle, and applied unto Christ; Gal. iii. 10. Hereon 'Abraham believed on the Lord, and it was counted unto him for righteousness;' Gen. xv. 6. For he saw the day of Christ and rejoiced; John viii. 56.

The faith that Jacob instructed his sons in, was, that the Shiloh should come, and unto him should be the gathering of

the nations; Gen. xlix. 10. Job's faith was, that his Redeemer was the living One, and that he should stand on the earth in the latter day; Job xix. 25.

The revelations made unto David principally concerned his person and the glory thereof, see Psal. ii. xlv. lxviii. lxxii. cx. cxviii. especially Psal. xlv. and lxxii. compared, which give an account of their apprehensions concerning him.

The faith of Daniel was that God would shew mercy for the Lord's sake; Dan. ix. 17. and of all the prophets, that the 'Redeemer should come to Sion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob;' Isa. lix. 20.

Of the same nature were all his personal appearances under the Old Testament, especially that most illustrious representation made of him unto the prophet Isaiah, chap. vi. and the glorious revelation of his name, chap. ix. 6.

It is true that both these and other prophets had revelations concerning his sufferings also. For 'the Spirit of Christ that was in them testified beforehand of his sufferings, and the glory that should ensue;' 2 Pet. i. 11. an illustrious testimony whereunto we have given us, Psal. xxii. and Isa. liii. Nevertheless their conceptions concerning them were dark and obscure. It was his person that their faith principally regarded. Thence were they filled with desires and expectations of his coming, or his exhibition and appearance in the flesh. With the renewed promises hereof did God continually refresh the church in its straits and difficulties. And hereby did God call off the body of the people from trust in themselves, or boasting in their present privileges, which they were exceedingly prone unto.

In process of time this faith which wrought effectually in the church of Israel, degenerated into a lifeless opinion, that proved the ruin of it. Whilst they really lived in the faith of him as the Saviour and Redeemer of the church from all its spiritual adversaries, as he who was to make 'an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness,' unto whom all their present ordinances were subservient and directive; all grace, love, zeal, and patient waiting for the accomplishment of the promise, flourished among them. But in process of time growing carnal, trusting in their own righteousness and the privileges which they had by the law,

their faith concerning the person of Christ degenerated into a corrupt, obstinate opinion, that he should be only a temporal king and deliverer; but as unto righteousness and salvation they were to trust unto themselves and the law. And this prejudicate opinion being indeed a renunciation of all the grace of the promises of God, proved their utter ruin. For when he came in the flesh, after so many ages, filled up with continued expectations, they rejected and despised him as one that had neither form nor comeliness for which he should be desired. So doth it fall out in other churches. That which was faith truly spiritual and evangelical in their first planting, becomes a lifeless opinion in succeeding ages. The same truths are still professed, but that profession springs not from the same causes, nor doth it produce the same effects in the hearts and lives of men. Hence in process of time, some churches continue to have an appearance of the same body which they were at first, but being examined, are like a lifeless, breathless, carcase; wherein the animating Spirit of grace doth not dwell. And then is any church, as it was with that of the Jews, nigh to destruction, when it corrupts formerly professed truths, to accommodate them unto the present lusts and inclinations of men.

CHAP. IX.

Honour due to the person of Christ; the nature and causes of it.

MANY other considerations of the same nature with those foregoing relating unto the glory and honour of the person of Christ, may be taken from all the fundamental principles of religion. And our duty it is in them all, to 'consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession the Author and Finisher of our faith.' I shall not insist on more, but proceed unto those principles of truth which are immediately directive of our duty towards him; without diligent attendance whereunto, we do but in vain bear the name of Christians. And the substance of what is designed may be included in the following assertion.

The glory, life, and power of Christian religion, as Christian religion, and as seated in the souls of men, with all the acts and duties which properly belong thereunto, and are therefore peculiarly Christian, and all the benefits and privileges we receive by it, or by virtue of it, with the whole of the honour and glory that arise unto God thereby, have all of them their formal nature and reason, from their respect and relation unto the person of Christ; nor is he a Christian who is otherwise minded.

In the confirmation hereof it will appear what judgment ought to be passed on that inquiry, which after the uninterrupted profession of the Catholic church for so many ages of a faith unto the contrary, is begun to be made by some amongst us; namely, of what use is the person of Christ in religion. For it proceeds on this supposition, and is determined accordingly, that there is something in religion wherein the person of Christ is of no use at all. A vain imagination, and such as is destructive unto the whole real intercourse between God and man, by the one and only Mediator.

The respect which we have in all acts of religion unto the person of Christ may be reduced unto these four heads. 1. Honour. 2. Obedience. 3. Conformity. 4. The use we make of him, for the attaining and receiving of all gospel privileges, all grace and glory. And hereunto the whole of our religion as it is Christian or evangelical may be reduced.

1. The person of Christ is the object of divine honour and worship. The formal object and reason hereof is the divine nature, and its essential infinite excellencies. For they are nothing but that respect unto the Divine Being, which is due unto it from all rational creatures regulated by revelation, and enforced by divine operations. Wherefore the person of Christ is primarily the object of divine honour and worship, upon the account of his divine nature and excellencies. And those who denying that nature in him, do yet pretend to worship him with divine and religious adoration, do but worship a golden calf of their own setting up; for a Christ who is not over all, God blessed for ever, is not better. And it implies a contradiction, that any creature should on any account, be the immediate proper object of divine worship; unless the divine essential excellencies be

communicated unto it, or transfused into it, whereby it would cease to be a creature. For that worship is nothing but the ascription of divine excellencies unto what is so worshipped.

But we now consider the Lord Christ, in his whole entire person, the Son of God incarnate, 'God manifest in the flesh.' His infinite condescension in the assumption of our nature, did no way divest him of his divine essential excellencies. For a time, they were shadowed and veiled thereby, from the eyes of men; when 'he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant.' But he eternally and unchangeably continued 'in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal unto him;' Phil. ii. 6, 7. He can no more really and essentially, by any act of condescension or humiliation, cease to be God, than God can cease to be. Wherefore, his being clothed with our nature, derogates nothing from the true reason of divine worship due unto him, but adds an effectual motive unto it. He is, therefore, the immediate object of all duties of religion, internal and external. And in the dispensation of God towards us, none of them can be performed in a due manner without a respect unto him.

This, then, in the first place is to be confirmed; namely, that all divine honour is due unto the Son of God incarnate, that is, the person of Christ.

John v. 23. It is the will of the Father, 'That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.' Some considerations on this divine testimony will confirm our position. It is of the Son incarnate that the words are spoken; as all judgment was committed unto him by the Father, as he was 'sent by him;' ver. 22. that is, of the whole person of Christ in the exercise of his mediatory office. And with respect hereunto it is, that the mind of God is peculiarly revealed. The way whereby God manifesteth his will, that all men should thus honour the Son, as they honour the Father, is by committing all power, authority, and judgment unto him; ver. 20—22. 'For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and

quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.' Not that these things are the formal reason and cause of the divine honour which is to be given him; but they are reasons of it, and motives unto it, in that they are evidences of his being the Son of God.

But it may be said, What need is there that the Father should so interpose an act of his will and sovereign pleasure, as to this honouring of the Son, seeing the sole cause and reason of this divine honour is the divine nature, which the Son is no less partaker of than the Father? I answer,

(1.) He doth not in this command intend the honour and worship of Christ absolutely as God, but distinctly as the Son, which peculiar worship was not known under the Old Testament, but was now declared necessary in the committing all power, authority, and judgment unto him. This is the honour whereof we speak.

(2.) He doth it, lest any should conceive that 'as he was now sent of the Father,' and that in the 'form of a servant,' this honour should not be due unto him. And the world was then far from thinking that it was so; and many, I fear, are yet of the same mind.

He is, therefore, to be honoured by us, according to the will of God, καθὼς 'in like manner,' as we honour the Father.

[1.] With the same honour; that is, divine, sacred, religious, and supreme. To honour the Father with other honour, is to dishonour him. When men design to give glory and honour to God which is not truly divine, it is idolatry. For this honour in truth is nothing but the ascription of all infinite divine excellencies unto him. Whereon when men ascribe unto him that which is not so, they fall into idolatry by the worship of their own imaginations. So was it with the Israelites when they thought to have given glory to God, by making a golden calf whereon they proclaimed a feast unto Jehovah; Exod. xxxii. 5. And so was it with the heathen in all their images of God, and the glory which they designed to give him thereby, as the apostle declares, Rom. i. 23. 25. This is one kind of idolatry, as the other is, the ascribing unto creatures any thing that is proper and peculiar unto God, any divine excellency. And we do not honour God the Father with one kind of honour, and the Son with

another. That were not to honour the Son, καθὼς, 'as' we honour the Father, but in a way infinitely different from it.

[2.] In the same manner, with the same faith, love, reverence, and obedience, always, in all things, in all acts and duties of religion whatever.

This distinct honour is to be given unto the person of the Son by virtue of this command of the Father, though originally on the account of his oneness in nature with the Father. And our duty herein is pressed with the highest enforcement; 'he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father. He who denieth the Son' (herein) 'hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also;' 1 John ii. 23. 'For this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in the Son. He that hath the Son, hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life;' chap. v. 11, 12. If we are wanting herein, whatever we pretend, we do not worship nor honour God at all.

And there is reason to give this caution; reason to fear that this great fundamental principle of our religion, is, if not disbelieved, yet not much attended unto in the world. Many who profess a respect unto the Divine Being, and the worship thereof, seem to have little regard unto the person of the Son in all their religion. For although they may admit of a customary interposition of his name in their religious worship; yet the same distinct veneration of him as of the Father, they seem not to understand, or to be exercised in. Howbeit, all the acceptance of our persons and duties with God, depend on this one condition, 'that we honour the Son, even as we honour the Father.' To honour the Son as we ought to honour the Father, is that which makes us Christians, and which nothing else will so do.

This honour of the person of Christ may be considered in the duties of it, wherein it doth consist; and in the principle, life, or spring, of those duties.

The duties whereby we ascribe and express divine honour unto Christ, may be reduced unto two heads. 1st. Adoration. 2dly. Invocation.

Adoration is the prostration of soul before him as God, in the acknowledgment of his divine excellencies and the ascription of them unto him. It is expressed in the Old Tes-

tament by השתחוה, that is, humbly to bow down ourselves or our souls unto God. The LXX render it constantly by προσκυνέω; which is the word used in the New Testament unto the same purpose. The Latins expressed it usually by *adoro*. And those words, though of other derivations, are of the same signification with that in the Hebrew; and they do all of them include some external sign of inward reverence, or a readiness thereunto. Hence is that expression, 'He bowed down his head and worshipped;' see Psal. xcv. 6. And these external signs are of two sorts. (1st.) Such as are natural and occasional. (2dly.) Such as are solemn, stated or instituted.

(1st.) Of the first sort are the lifting up of our eyes and hands towards heaven upon our thoughts of him; and sometimes the casting down of our whole persons before him, which deep thoughts with reverence will produce. Outward instituted signs of this internal adoration are all the ordinances of evangelical worship. In and by them do we solemnly profess and express our inward veneration of him. Other ways may be invented to the same purpose, but the Scripture knows them not, yea, condemns them. Such are the veneration and adoration of the pretended images of him, and of the host, as they call it, among the Papists.

This adoration is due continually to the person of Christ, and that as in the exercise of the office of mediation. It is due unto him from the whole rational creation of God. So is it given in charge unto the angels above. For when he brought the first-begotten in the world, he said, προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ παντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ, that is, השתחוו לו כל אלהים 'worship him all ye gods;' Psal. xcvii. 7. 'Let all the angels of God worship him,' adore him, bow down before him; Heb. i. 6. See our exposition of that place; the design of the whole chapter being to express the divine honour that is due unto the person of Christ, with the grounds thereof. This is the command given also unto the church, 'He is thy Lord, and worship thou him;' Psal. xlv. 11.

A glorious representation hereof, whether in the church above, or in that militant here on the earth, is given us, Rev. v. 6—14. 'And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven

horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the same four beasts said, Amen. And the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.'

The especial object of divine adoration, the motives unto it, and the nature of it, or what it consisteth in, are here declared.

[1st.] The object of it is Christ, not separately, but distinctly from the Father, and jointly with him. And he is proposed, 1*st*. As having fulfilled the work of his mediation in his incarnation and oblation; as a Lamb slain. 2*dly*. In his glorious exaltation, 'in the midst of the throne of God.' The principal thing that the heathen of old observed concerning Christian religion, was, that in it, 'praises were sung to Christ as unto God.'

[2dly.] The motives unto this adoration are the unspeakable benefits which we receive by his mediation; 'Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God,' &c.

Hereon the same glory, the same honour, is ascribed unto

him as unto God the Father; 'blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.'

[3dly.] The nature of this adoration is described to consist in three things. 1*st*. Solemn prostration. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.' So also is it described, chap. iv. 10, 11. 2*dly*. In the ascription of all divine honour and glory, as is at large expressed, ver. 11—13. 3. In the way of expressing the design of their souls in this adoration, which is by the praises; 'they sung a new song;' that is, of praise, for so are all those psalms which have that title of a new song. And in these things, namely, solemn prostration of soul in the acknowledgment of divine excellencies, ascriptions of glory and honour with praise, doth religious adoration consist. And they belong not unto the great holy society of them who worship above and here below; whose hearts are not always ready unto this solemn adoration of the Lamb, and who are not on all occasions exercised therein.

And this adoration of Christ doth differ from the adoration of God absolutely considered, and of God as the Father, not in its nature, but merely on the account of its especial motives. The principal motive unto the adoration of God absolutely considered, is the work of creation, the manifestation of his glory therein, with all the effects of his power and goodness thereon ensuing. So it is declared, Rev. iv. 8—11. 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' And the principal motive unto the adoration and worship of God as the Father, is that eternal love, grace, and goodness, which he is the fountain of in a peculiar manner; Eph. i. 4, 5. But the great motive unto the adoration of Christ is the work of redemption; Rev. v. 12. 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' The reason whereof is given, ver. 9, 10. 'For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.' The adoration is the same, ver. 13. 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon

the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' But the immediate motives of it are different, as its objects are distinct.

Herein no small part of the life of Christian religion doth consist. The humbling of our souls before the Lord Christ from an apprehension of his divine excellencies, the ascription of glory, honour, praise, with thanksgiving unto him, on the great motive of the work of redemption, with the blessed effects thereof, are things wherein the life of faith is continually exercised. Nor can we have any evidence of an interest in that blessedness which consists in the eternal assignation of all glory and praise unto him in heaven, if we are not exercised unto this worship of him, here on earth.

2dly. Invocation is the second general branch of divine honour; of that honour which is due and paid unto the Son, as unto the Father. This is the first exercise of divine faith, the breath of the spiritual life. And it consisteth in two things, or hath two parts. (1st.) An ascription of all divine properties and excellencies unto him whom we invocate. This is essential unto prayer, which without it is but vain babbling. Whoever cometh unto God hereby, 'must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' (2dly.) There is in it also a representation of our wills, affections, and desires of our souls, unto him on whom we call, with an expectation of being heard and relieved, by virtue of his infinitely divine excellencies. This is the proper acting of faith with respect unto ourselves; and hereby it is our duty to give honour unto the person of Christ.

When he himself died in the flesh, he committed his departing soul by solemn invocation into the hands of his Father, Psal. xxxi. 5. Luke xxiii. 4. 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' And to evidence that it is the will of God, that we should honour the Son, as we honour the Father, even as the Son himself in his human nature, who is our example, honoured the Father. He who first died in the faith of the gospel, bequeathed his departing soul into the hands of 'Jesus Christ by solemn invocation; Acts vii. 59. 'They stoned Stephen, ἐπικαλούμενον, solemnly invocating, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And having by faith and prayer, left his own soul safe in the hand of the Lord Jesus, he adds one petition more unto him, wherewith he died, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;'

ver. 60. Herein did he give divine honour unto Christ in the especial invocation of his name, in the highest instances that can be conceived. In his first request wherein he committed his departing soul into his hands, he ascribed unto him divine omniscience, omnipresence, love, and power. And in the latter for his enemies, divine authority and mercy to be exercised in the pardon of sin. In his example is the rule established, for the especial invocation of Christ for the effects of divine power and mercy.

Hence the apostle describeth the church or believers, and distinguisheth it, or them, from all others, by the discharge of this duty; 1 Cor. i. 2. 'With all that call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.' To call on the name of the Lord Jesus expresseth solemn invocation in the way of religious worship. The Jews did call on the name of God. All others in their way called on the names of their gods. This is that whereby the church is distinguished from them all; it calls on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He requires that as we believe on God, that is, the Father, so we should believe on him also, and therein honour the Son, as we honour the Father; John xiv. 1. The nature of this faith, and the manner how it is exercised on Christ, we shall declare afterward. But the apostle treating of the nature and efficacy of this invocation, affirms, that we 'cannot call on him in whom we have not believed;' Rom. x. 14. Whence it follows on the contrary, that he on whom we are bound to believe, on him it is our duty to call. So the whole Scripture is closed with a prayer of the church unto the Lord Christ, expressing their faith in him; 'Even so, come Lord Jesus;' Rev. xxii. 20.

There is not any one reason of prayer, not any one motive unto it, not any consideration of its use or efficacy, but render this peculiar invocation of Christ, a necessary duty. Two things in general are required to render the duty of invocation lawful and useful. First, that it have a proper object. Secondly, that it have prevalent motives and encouragements unto it. These in concurrence are the formal reason and ground of all religious worship in general, and of prayer in particular. So are they laid down as the foundation of all religion; Exod. xx. 2, 3. 'I am the Lord thy

God,' that is, the proper object of all religious worship; 'which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;' which being summarily and typically representative of all divine benefits, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, is the great motive thereunto. The want of both these in all mere creatures, saints and angels, makes the invocation of them, not only useless, but idolatrous. But they both eminently concur in the person of Christ, and his actings towards us. All the perfections of the divine nature are in him, whence he is the proper object of religious invocation. On this account when he acted in and towards the church, as the great angel of the covenant, God instructed the people unto all religious observance of him, and obedience unto him; Exod. xxiii. 21. 'Beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him.' Because the name of God was in him, that is, the divine nature, with sovereign authority to punish or pardon sin, therefore was all religious obedience due unto him. And no motives are wanting hereunto. All that the Lord Christ hath done for us, and all the principles of love, grace, compassion, and power, from whence what he hath so done did proceed, are all of this nature. And they are accompanied with the encouragement of his relation unto us, and charge concerning us. Take away this duty, and the peculiar advantage of Christian religion is destroyed.

We have lived to see the utmost extremes that Christian religion can divert into. Some, with all earnestness, do press the formal invocation of saints and angels as our duty. And some will not grant that it is lawful for us so to call on Christ himself.

The Socinians grant generally that it is lawful for us to call on Christ; but they deny that it is our duty at any time so to do. But as they own that it is not our duty, so on their principles it cannot be lawful. Denying his divine person, they leave him not the proper object of prayer. For prayer without an ascription of divine excellencies, as omniscience, omnipresence, and almighty power unto him whom we invocate, is but vain babbling, that hath nothing of the nature of true prayer in it. And to make such

ascriptions unto him who by nature is not God, is idolatrous.

The solemn ordinary worship of the church, and so of private believers, in their families and closets, is under an especial directory and guidance. For the person of the Father, as the eternal fountain of power, grace, and mercy, is the formal object of our prayers, unto whom our supplications are directed. The divine nature absolutely considered, is the object of natural worship and invocation; but it is the same divine nature in the person of the Father, that is the proper object of evangelical worship and invocation. So our Saviour hath taught us to call on God under the name and notion of a father; Matt. vi. 9. that is, his God, and our God, his Father, and our Father; John xx. 17. And this invocation is to be, by and in the name of the Son Jesus Christ, through the aid of the Holy Spirit. He is herein considered as the Mediator between God and man; as the Holy Ghost is he by whom supplies of grace, enabling us unto the acceptable performance of our duties, are actually communicated unto us. This is the way whereby God will be glorified. This is the mystery of our religion, that we worship God according to the economy of his wisdom and grace, wherein he doth dispense of himself unto us in the persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Otherwise he will not be honoured or worshipped by us. And those who in their worship or invocation do attempt an approach unto the divine nature as absolutely considered, without respect unto the dispensation of God in the distinct persons of the holy Trinity, do reject the mystery of the gospel, and all the benefits of it. So is it with many. And not a few, who pretend a great devotion unto God, do supply other things into the room of Christ, as saints and angels; rejecting also the aids of the Spirit to comply with imaginations of their own, whose assistance herein they more approve of.

But this is the nature and method of ordinary solemn evangelical invocation. So it is declared, Eph. ii. 18. 'Through him we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.' It is the Father unto whom we have our access, whom we peculiarly invocate; as it is expressed, chap. iii. 14—16. 'For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you,' &c. But it is through him, that is, by Christ in the exercise of his mediatory office that we have this access unto the Father; we ask in his name, and for his sake; John xiv. 13, 14. xvi, 23, 24. They did so of old, though not in that express exercise of faith which we now attain unto; Dan. ix. 17. 'Hear, O Lord, and have mercy for the Lord's sake.' All this are we enabled unto by one Spirit; through the aids and assistance of the Spirit of grace and supplication; Rom. viii. 26, 27. So that prayer is our crying, 'Abba Father, by the Spirit of the Son;' Gal. iv. 6. This is farther declared, Heb. iv. 15, 16. x. 19, 20. Herein is the Lord Christ considered, not absolutely with respect unto his divine person, but with respect unto his office, that 'through him our faith and hope might be in God,' 1 Pet. i. 20.

Wherefore it being our duty, as hath been proved, to invocate the name of Christ in a particular manner, and this being the ordinary solemn way of the worship of the church, we may consider on what occasions, and in what seasons, this peculiar invocation of Christ, who in his divine person is both our God and our Advocate, is necessary for us, and most acceptable unto him.

(1st.) Times of great distresses in conscience through temptations and desertions, are seasons requiring an application unto Christ by especial invocation. Persons in such conditions, when their souls, as the psalmist speaks, are overwhelmed in them, are continually solicitous about compassion and deliverance. Some relief, some refreshment, they often find in pity and compassion from them who either have been in the same condition themselves, or by Scripture light do know the terror of the Lord in these things. When their complaints are despised, and their troubles ascribed unto other causes than what they are really sensible of, and feel within themselves, as is commonly done by physicians of no value, it is an aggravation of their distress and sorrow. And they greatly value every sincere endeavour for relief, either by counsel or prayer. In this state and condition the Lord Christ in the gospel is proposed as full of tender compassion, as he alone who is able to relieve them. In that

himself hath suffered being tempted, he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and knows how to have compassion on them that are out of the way; Heb. ii. 18. iv. 15. v. 6. So is he also, as he alone who is able to succour, to relieve, and to deliver them. 'He is able to succour them that are tempted;' Heb. ii. 18. Hereon are they drawn, constrained, encouraged to make applications unto him by prayer, that he would deal with them according to his compassion and power. This is a season rendering the discharge of this duty necessary. And hereby have innumerable souls found consolation, refreshment, and deliverance. A time of trouble is a time of the especial exercise of faith in Christ. So himself gives direction, John xiv. 1. 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Distinct actings of faith on Christ, are the great means of supportment and relief in trouble. And it is by especial invocation whereby they put forth and exert themselves.

An instance hereof as unto temptation, and the distress wherewith it is attended, we have in the apostle Paul. He had a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him. Both expressions declare the deep sense he had of his temptation, and the perplexity wherewith it was accompanied. 'For this cause he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him;' 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. He applied himself solemnly unto prayer for its removal, and that frequently. And it was the Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ unto whom he made his application. For so the name Lord is to be interpreted if there be nothing contrary in the context, as the name of God is of the Father, by virtue of that rule, 1 Cor. viii. 6, 7. 'To us there is one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.' And it is evident also in the context. The answer he received unto his prayer was 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' And whose power that was, who gave him that answer, he declares in the next words, 'Most gladly therefore will I glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me,' that is, the power of him on whom he called, who gave him that answer, 'My power is made perfect in weakness.'

(2dly.) Times of gracious discoveries either of the glory

of Christ in himself, or of his love unto us, are seasons that call for this duty. The glory of Christ in his person and offices is always the same. And the revelation that is made of it in the Scripture varieth not. But as unto our perception and apprehension of it, whereby our hearts and minds are affected with it in an especial manner, there are apparent seasons of it, which no believers are unacquainted withal. Sometimes such a sense of it is attained under the dispensation of the word, wherein as Christ on the one hand is set forth evidently crucified before our eyes, so on the other he is gloriously exalted. Sometimes it is so in prayer, in meditation, in contemplation on him. As an ability was given unto the bodily sight of Stephen, to see upon the opening of the heavens, 'the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand;' Acts vii. 56, 57. so he opens the veil sometimes, and gives a clear affecting discovery of his glory unto the minds and souls of believers; and in such seasons are they drawn forth and excited unto invocation and praise. So Thomas, being surprised with an apprehension and evidence of his divine glory and power after his resurrection, wherein he was declared to be the Son of God with power, Rom. i. 4. cried unto him, 'My Lord and my God,' John xx. 28. There was in his words both a profession of his own faith, and a solemn invocation of Christ. When therefore we have real discoveries of the glory of Christ, we cannot but speak to him, or of him. 'These things said Isaiah when he saw his glory and spake of him,' John xii. 41. And Stephen upon a view of it in the midst of his enraged enemies, testified immediately, 'I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.' And thereby was he prepared for that solemn invocation of his name, which he used presently after, 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit;' Acts vii. 56. 59. And so also upon his appearance as the Lamb to open the book of prophecies, wherein there was an eminent manifestation of his glory, seeingnone else could be found in heaven or earth, or under the earth, that was able to open the book, or so much as to look thereon, Rev. v. 3. 'The four and twenty elders fell down before him,' and presenting all the prayers of the saints, 'sang a new song of praise unto him;' ver. 8—10. This is our duty, this will be our wisdom, upon affecting discoveries of the glory of

Christ; namely, to apply ourselves unto him by invocation or praise; and thereby will the refreshment and advantage of them abide upon our minds.

So is it also as unto his love. The love of Christ is always the same and equal unto the church. Howbeit there are peculiar seasons of the manifestation and application of a sense of it unto the souls of believers. So it is when it is witnessed unto them, or shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Then is it accompanied with a constraining power to oblige us to live unto him who died for us, and rose again; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. And of our spiritual life unto Christ, invocation of him is no small portion. And this sense of his love we might enjoy more frequently than for the most part we do, were we not so much wanting unto ourselves and our own concerns. For although it be an act of sovereign grace in God, to grant it unto us, and affect us with it, as it seems good unto him; yet is our duty required to dispose our hearts unto its reception. Were we diligent in casting out all that 'filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,' which corrupts our affections, and disposes the mind to abound in vain imaginations; were our hearts more taken off from the love of the world, which is exclusive of a sense of divine love; did we more meditate on Christ and his glory, we should more frequently enjoy these constraining visits of his love, than now we do. So himself expresseth it, Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' He makes intimation of his love and kindness unto us. But oft-times we neither hear his voice when he speaks, nor do open our hearts unto him. So do we lose that gracious refreshing sense of his love which he expresseth in that promise, 'I will sup with him, and he shall sup with me.' No tongue can express that heavenly communion and blessed intercourse which is intimated in this promise. The expression is metaphorical, but the grace expressed is real, and more valued than the whole world, by all that have experience of it. This sense of the love of Christ, and the effect of it in communion with him, by prayer and praises, is divinely set forth in the Book of Canticles. The church therein is represented as the spouse of Christ; and as a faithful spouse she is always either soli-

citous about his love, or rejoicing in it. And when she hath attained a sense of it, she aboundeth in invocation, admiration, and praise. So doth the church of the New Testament upon an apprehension of his love, and the unspeakable fruits of it. 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen;' Rev. i. 5, 6. This therefore is another season that calls for this duty.

(3dly.) Times of persecution for his name's sake, and for the profession of the gospel, are another season rendering this peculiar invocation of Christ both comely and necessary. Two things will befall the minds of believers in such a season. [1st.] That their thoughts will be greatly exercised about him, and conversant with him. They cannot but continually think and meditate on him for whom they suffer. None ever suffered persecution on just grounds, with sincere ends, and in a due manner, but it was so with them. The invincible reasons they have to suffer for him, taken from his person, love, grace, and authority, from what he is in himself, what he hath done for them, and what account of all things is to be given unto him, do continually present themselves unto their minds. Wildernesses, prisons, and dungeons, have been filled with thoughts of Christ and his love. And many in former and latter ages have given an account of their communion and holy intercourse with the Lord Christ under their restraints and sufferings. And those who at any time have made an entrance into such a condition, will all of them give in the testimony of their own experience in this matter. [2dly.] Such persons have deep and fixed apprehensions of the especial concernment which the Lord Christ hath in them as unto their present condition; as also of his power to support them, or to work out their deliverance. They know and consider, 'That in all their afflictions, he is afflicted,' suffers in all their sufferings, is persecuted in all their persecutions. That in them all he is full of love, pity, and unspeakable compassion towards them; that his grace is sufficient for them, that his power shall be perfected in their weakness, to carry them through all their sufferings unto his and their own glory. In these circumstances, it is impossible for them who are under the conduct of his spirit,

An answer unto an inquiry which may possibly arise from what we have insisted on, shall close this discourse. For whereas the Lord Jesus Christ as mediator doth intercede with the Father for us, it may be inquired, Whether we may pray unto him, that he would so intercede on our behalf; whether this be comprised in the duty of invocation, or prayer unto him?

Ans. 1. There is no precedent nor example of any such thing, of any such prayer in the Scripture. And it is not safe for us to venture on duties not exemplified therein. Nor can any instance of a necessary duty be given, of whose performance we have not an example in the Scripture.

2. In the invocation of Christ, we 'honour the Son, even as we honour the Father.' Wherefore his divine person is therein the formal object of our faith. We consider him not therein as acting in his mediatory office towards God for us, but as he who hath the absolute power and disposal of all the good things we pray for. And in our invocation of him, our faith is fixed on, and terminated on his person. But as he is in the discharge of his mediatory office, through him 'our faith and hope is in God;' 1 Pet. i. 21. He who is the mediator, or Jesus Christ the mediator, as God and man in one person, is the object of all divine honour and worship. His person, and both his natures in that person, is so the object of religious worship. This is that which we are in the proof and demonstration of. Howbeit it is his divine nature, and not his discharge of the office of mediation, that is the formal reason and object of divine worship. For it consists in an ascription of infinitely divine excellencies and properties unto him whom we so worship. And to do this on any account but of the divine nature, is in itself a contradiction, and in them that do it idolatry. Had the Son of God never been incarnate, he had been the object of all divine worship. And could there have been a mediator between God and us, who was not God also, he could never have been the object of any divine worship or invocation. Wherefore Christ the mediator, God and man in one person, is in all things to be honoured even as we honour the Father; but it is as he is God equal with the Father, and not as mediator, in which respect he is inferior unto him. With

respect unto his divine person we ask immediately of himself in our supplications; as he is mediator we ask of the Father in his name. The different actings of faith on him, under the same distinction, shall be declared in the next chapter.

CHAP. X.

The principle of the assignation of divine honour unto the person of Christ, in both the branches of it; which is faith in him.

THE principle and spring of this assignation of divine honour unto Christ in both the branches of it, is faith in him. And this hath been the foundation of all acceptable religion in the world since the entrance of sin. There are some who deny that faith in Christ was required from the beginning, or was necessary unto the worship of God, or the justification and salvation of them that did obey him. For whereas it must be granted that 'without faith it is impossible to please God,' which the apostle proves by instances from the foundation of the world; Heb. xi. They suppose it is faith in God under the general notion of it, without any respect unto Christ that is intended. It is not my design to contend with any, nor expressly to confute such ungrateful opinions, such pernicious errors. Such this is, which being pursued in its proper tendency, strikes at the very foundation of Christian religion. For it at once deprives us of all contribution of light and truth from the Old Testament. Somewhat I have spoken before of the faith of the saints of old concerning him. I shall now, therefore, only confirm the truth, by some principles which are fundamental in the faith of the gospel.

1. The first promise, Gen. iii. 15. truly called Πρωτευαγγέλιον, was revealed, proposed, and given, as containing and expressing the only means of delivery from that apostacy from God, with all the effects of it, under which our first parents, and all their posterity were cast by sin. The destruction of Satan and his work in his introduction of the state of sin, by a saviour and deliverer was prepared and provided for in it. This is the very foundation of the faith

of the church; and if it be denied, nothing of the economy or dispensation of God towards it from the beginning can be understood. The whole doctrine and story of the Old Testament must be rejected as useless, and no foundation be left in the truth of God, for the introduction of the New.

2. It was the person of Christ, his incarnation and mediation, that were promised under the name of the 'seed of the woman,' and the work he should do in 'breaking the head of the serpent,' with the way whereby he should do it, in suffering, by his power. The accomplishment hereof was in God's sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the fulness of time, made under the law, or by his manifestation in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil. So is this promise interpreted, Gal. iii. 10. iv. 4. Heb. ii. 14—16. 1 John iii. 8. This cannot be denied but upon one of these two grounds.

(1.) That nothing is intended in that divine revelation, but only a natural enmity that is between mankind and serpents. But this is so foolish an imagination, that the Jews themselves, who constantly refer this place to the Messiah, are not guilty of. All the whole truth concerning God's displeasure on the sin of our first parents, with what concerneth the nature and consequence of that sin, is everted hereby. And whereas the foundation of all God's future dealing with them and their posterity is plainly expressed herein, it is turned into that which is ludicrous, and of very little concernment in human life. For such is the enmity between mankind and serpents, which not one in a million know any thing of, or are troubled with. This is but to lay the axe of atheism unto all religion built on divine revelation. Besides, on this supposition there is in the words not the least intimation of any relief, that God tendered unto our parents for their delivery from the state and condition whereinto they had cast themselves by their sin and apostacy. Wherefore they must be esteemed to be left absolutely under the curse, as the angels were that fell, which is to root all religion out of the world. For amongst them who are absolutely under the curse without any remedy, there can be no more than is in hell. Or,

(2.) It must be, because some other way of deliverance and salvation, and not that by Christ, is here proposed and

promised. But whereas they were to be wrought by the 'seed of the woman,' if this were not that Christ in whom we do believe, there was another promised, and he is to be rejected. And this is fairly at once to blot out the whole Scripture as a fable. For there is not a line of doctrinal truth in it, but what depends on the traduction of Christ from this first promise.

3. This promise was confirmed, and the way of the deliverance of the church by virtue of it declared in the institution of expiatory sacrifices. God in them and by them declared from the beginning, that 'without shedding of blood there was no remission;' that atonement for sin was to be made by substitution and satisfaction. With respect unto them, the Lord Christ was called 'the Lamb of God,' even as he took away the sins of the world by the sacrifice of himself; John i. 29. For we 'were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;' 1 Pet. i. 19. Wherein the Holy Spirit refers unto the institution and nature of sacrifices from the beginning. And he is thence represented in heaven as a 'lamb that had been slain;' Rev. iv. 6. the glory of heaven arising from the fruits and effects of his sacrifice. And because of the representation thereof in all the former sacrifices, is he said to be a 'lamb slain from the foundation of the world;' Rev. xiii. 8. And it is strange to me that any who deny not the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, should doubt whether the original of these sacrifices were of divine institution or the invention of men. And it is so amongst others for the reasons ensuing.

(1.) On the supposition that they were of men's finding out, and voluntary observation, without any previous divine revelation, it must be granted that the foundation of all acceptable religion in the world, was laid in, and resolved into, the wisdom and wills of men, and not into the wisdom, authority, and will of God. For that the great solemnity of religion, which was as the centre and testimony of all its other duties, did consist in these sacrifices even before the giving of the law, will not be denied. And in the giving of the law, God did not on this supposition confirm and establish his own institutions with additions unto them of the same kind, but set his seal and approbation unto the in-

ventions of men. But this is contrary unto natural light, and the whole current of Scripture revelations.

(2.) All expiatory sacrifices were from the beginning, types and representations of the sacrifice of Christ, whereon all their use, efficacy, and benefit among men, all their acceptance with God, did depend. Remove this consideration from them, and they were as irrational a service, as unbecoming the divine nature, as any thing that reasonable creatures could fix upon. They are to this day, as reasonable a service as ever they were, but that only their respect unto the sacrifice of Christ is taken from them. And what person of any ordinary understanding, could now suppose them a meet service whereby to glorify the divine nature. Besides, all expiatory sacrifices were of the same nature, and of the same use, both before and after the giving of the law. But that all those afterward were typical of the sacrifice of Christ, the apostle demonstrates at large in his Epistle unto the Hebrews. The inquiry therefore is, whether this blessed prefiguration of the Lord Christ and his sacrifice, as he was the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, was an effect of the wisdom, goodness, and will of God, or of the wills and inventions of men. And let it be considered also, that these men who are supposed to be the authors of this wonderful representation of the Lord Christ and his sacrifice, did indeed know little of them, or as the asserters of this opinion imagine nothing at all. To suppose that those who knew no more of Christ than they could learn from the first promise, which, as some think was nothing at all, should of their own heads find out and appoint this divine service, which consisted only in the prefiguration of him and his sacrifice, and that God should not only approve of it, but allow it as the principal means for the establishment and exercise of the faith of all believers for four thousand years, is to indulge unto thoughts deviating from all rules of sobriety. He that sees not a divine wisdom in this institution, hath scarce seriously exercised his thoughts about it. But I have elsewhere considered the causes and original of these sacrifices, and shall not therefore farther insist upon them.

4. Our first parents and all their holy posterity did believe this promise, or did embrace it as the only way and means of their deliverance from the curse and state of sin,

and were thereon justified before God. I confess we have not infallible assurance of any who did so in particular, but those who are mentioned by name in Scripture, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, and some others. But to question it concerning others also, as of our first parents themselves, is foolish and impious. This is done by the Socinians, to promote another design, namely, that none were justified before God on the belief of the first promise, but on their walking according to the light of nature and their obedience unto some especial revelations about temporal things; the vanity whereof hath been before discovered. Wherefore, our first parents and their posterity did so believe the first promise, or they must be supposed, either to have been kept under the curse, or else to have had, and to make use of, some other way of deliverance from it. To imagine the first is impious; for the apostle affirms that they had this 'testimony that they pleased God;' Heb. xi. 5. which under the curse none can do; for that is God's displeasure. And in the same place he confirms their faith, and justification thereon, with a 'cloud of witnesses;' chap. xii. 2. To affirm the latter is groundless. And it includes a supposal of the relinquishment of the wisdom, grace, and authority of God in that divine revelation, for men to betake themselves to none knows what. For that there was in this promise the way expressed which God in his wisdom and grace had provided for their deliverance, we have proved before. To forsake this way, and to betake themselves unto any other, whereof he had made no mention or revelation unto them, was to reject his authority and grace.

As for those who are otherwise minded, it is incumbent on them directly to prove these three things.

(1.) That there is another way, that there are other means for the justification and salvation of sinners, than that revealed, declared, and proposed in that first promise. And when this is done, they must shew to what end on that supposition the promise itself was given, seeing the end of it is evacuated.

(2.) That upon a supposition that God had revealed in the promise the way and means of our deliverance from the curse and state of sin, it was lawful unto men to forsake it, and to betake themselves unto another way, without any su-

pernatural revelation for their guidance. For if it was not, their relinquishment of the promise was no less apostacy from God in the revelation of himself in a way of grace, than the first sin was, as to the revelation of himself in the works of nature. Only the one revelation was by inbred principles, the other by external declaration, nor could it otherwise be. Or,

(3.) That there was some other way of the participation of the benefits of this promise, besides faith in it, or in him who was promised therein; seeing the apostle hath declared that no promise will profit them, 'by whom it is not mixed with faith;' Heb. iv. 2. Unless these things are plainly proved, which they will never be, whatever men declaim about universal objective grace in the documents of nature, it is but a vain imagination.

5. The declaration of this promise before the giving of the law with the nature and ends of it, as also the use of sacrifices whereby it was confirmed, was committed unto the ordinary ministry of our first parents and their godly posterity, and the extraordinary ministry of the prophets which God raised up among them. For God spake of our redemption by Christ, by the 'mouth of his holy prophets from the beginning of the world;' Luke i. 70. No greater duty could be incumbent on them by the light of nature and the express revelation of the will of God, than that they should in their several capacities, communicate the knowledge of this promise unto all in whom they were concerned. To suppose that our first parents who received this promise, and those unto whom they first declared it, looking on it as the only foundation of their acceptance with God, and deliverance from the curse, were negligent in the declaration and preaching of it, is to render them brutish, and guilty of a second apostacy from God. And unto this principle which is founded in the light of nature, there is countenance given by revelation also. For Enoch did prophesy of the things which were to accompany the accomplishment of this promise; Jude 15. and Noah was a preacher of the righteousness to be brought in by it; 2 Pet. ii. 5. as he was an heir of the righteousness which is by faith, in himself; Heb. xi. 7.

6. All the promises that God gave afterward unto the

church under the Old Testament, before and after giving the law, all the covenants that he entered into with particular persons, or the whole congregation of believers, were all of them declarations and confirmations of this first promise, or the way of salvation by the mediation of his Son, becoming the seed of the woman to break the head of the serpent, and to work out the deliverance of mankind. As most of these promises were expressly concerning him, so all of them in the counsel of God were confirmed in him; 2 Cor. i. 20. And as there are depths in the Scripture of the Old Testament concerning him which we cannot fathom; and things innumerable spoken of him or in his person which we conceive not; so the principal design of the whole is the declaration of him and his grace. And it is unprofitable unto them who are otherwise minded. Sundry promises concerning temporal things were on various occasions superadded unto this great spiritual promise of life and grace. And the enemies of the person and mediation of Christ, do contend that men are justified by their faith and obedience with respect unto those particular revelations, which were only concerning temporal things. But to suppose that all those revelations and promises were not built upon, and resolved into, did not include in them the grace and mercy of this first promise, is to make them curses instead of blessings, and deprivations of that grace which was infinitely better than what on this supposition was contained in them. The truth is, they were all additions unto it, and confirmations of it, nor had any thing of spiritual good in them, but upon a supposition of it. In some of them there was an ampliation of grace in the more full declaration of the nature of this promise, as well as an application unto their persons unto whom they were made. Such was the promise made unto Abraham, which had a direct respect unto Christ as the apostle proveth, Gal. iii. 4.

7. Those who voluntarily through the contempt of God and divine grace fell off from the knowledge and faith of this promise, whether at once and by choice, or gradually through the love of sin, were in no better condition than those have been, or would be, who have so fallen off, or should so apostatize from Christian religion after its revelation and profession. And although this proved in process

of time, both before and after the flood, to be the condition of the generality of mankind, yet is it in vain to seek after the means of salvation among them, who had voluntarily rejected the only way which God had revealed and provided for that end. God thereon 'suffered all nations to walk in their own ways;' Acts xiv. 16. 'winking at the times of their ignorance,' not calling them to repentance; chap. xvii. 30. yea, he 'gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels;' Psal. lxxxi. 12. And nothing can be more derogatory unto the wisdom and holiness of God, than to imagine that he would grant other ways of salvation unto them, who had rejected that only one which he had provided, which was by faith in Christ, as revealed in that first promise.

8. From these considerations, which are all of them unquestionable principles of truth, two things are evident.

(1.) That there was no way of the justification and salvation of sinners, revealed and proposed from the foundation of the world, but only by Jesus Christ, as declared in the first promise.

(2.) That there was no way for the participation of the benefits of that promise, or of his work of mediation, but by faith in him as so promised. There was therefore faith in him required from the foundation of the world; that is, from the entrance of sin. And how this faith respected his person hath been before declared. Now faith in him as promised for the works and ends of his mediation, and faith in him as actually exhibited, and as having accomplished his work, are essentially the same, and differ only with respect unto the economy of times which God disposed at his pleasure. Hence the efficacy of his mediation was the same unto them who then so believed, as it is now unto us after his actual exhibition in the flesh.

But yet it is acknowledged, that as unto the clearness and fulness of the revelation of the mystery of the wisdom and grace of God in him, as unto the constitution of his person in his incarnation, and therein the determination of the individual person promised from the beginning, through the actual accomplishment of the work which he was promised for. Faith in him as the foundation of that divine honour which it is our duty to give unto him, is far more evidently and

manifestly revealed and required in the gospel, or under the New Testament, than it was under the Old. See Eph. iii. 8—11. The respect of faith now unto Christ, is that which renders it truly evangelical. To belive in him, to believe on his name, is that signal especial duty which is now required of us.

Wherefore the ground of the actual assignation of divine honour unto the person of Christ in both branches of it, adoration and invocation, is faith in him. So he said unto the blind man whose eyes he opened, 'Believest thou on the Son of God?' John ix. 35. And he said, 'Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him;' ver. 38. All divine worship or adoration, is a consequent effect and fruit of faith. So also is invocation; for 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' Rom. x. 14. Him, in whom we believe, we ought to adore and invocate. For these are the principal ways whereby divine faith doth act itself. And so to adore or invocate any, in whom we ought not to believe is idolatry.

This faith therefore on the person of Christ is our duty. Yea, such a duty it is, as that our eternal condition doth more peculiarly depend on the performance or nonperformance of it, than on any other duty whatever. For constantly under those terms is it prescribed unto us. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;' John iii. 36. Wherefore the nature and exercise of this faith must be inquired into.

[1.] There is a faith which is exercised towards those by whom the mind and will of God is revealed. So it is said of the Israelites, 'they believed the Lord and Moses,' Exod. xiv. 33. that is, that he was sent of God, was no deceiver, that it was the word and will of God which he revealed unto them. So 2 Chron. xx. 20. 'Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.' It was not the persons of the prophets, but their message that was the object of the faith required. It was to believe what they said, as from God, not to believe in them as if they were God. So is it explained by the apostle, Acts xxvi. 27. 'King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.' He believed that they were

sent of God, and that the word they spake was from him; otherwise, there was no believing of them who were dead so many ages before.

And this is all the faith in Christ himself which some will allow. To believe in Christ, they say, is only to believe the doctrine of the gospel revealed by him. Hence they deny that any could believe in him, before his coming into the world, and the declaration of the mind of God in the gospel made by him. An assent unto the truth of the gospel as revealed by Christ, is with them the whole of that faith in Christ Jesus which is required of us.

Of all that poison which at this day is diffused in the minds of men corrupting them from the mystery of the gospel, there is no part that is more pernicious than this one perverse imagination, that to believe in Christ is nothing at all but to believe the doctrine of the gospel, which yet we grant is included therein. For as it allows the consideration of no office in him, but that of a prophet, and that not as vested and exercised in his divine person, so it utterly overthrows the whole foundation of the relation of the church unto him, and salvation by him.

That which suits my present design, is to evince that it is the person of Christ which is the first and principal object of that faith wherewith we are required to believe in him; and that so to do, is not only to assent unto the truth of the doctrine revealed by him, but also to place our trust and confidence in him, for mercy, relief, and protection; for righteousness, life, and salvation; for a blessed resurrection and eternal reward. This I shall first manifest from some few of those multiplied testimonies, wherein this truth is declared, and whereby it is confirmed, as also with some arguments taken from them, and then proceed to declare the ground, nature, and exercise of this faith itself.

1st. As unto the testimonies confirming this truth, it must be observed of them all in general, that wherever faith is required towards our Lord Jesus Christ, it is still called believing 'in him,' or 'on his name,' according as faith in God absolutely is every where expressed. If no more be intended but only the belief of the doctrine revealed by him; then whose doctrine soever we are obliged to believe, we may be rightly said to believe in them, or to believe on their

name. For instance; we are obliged to believe the doctrine of Paul the apostle, the revelations made by him, and that on the hazard of our eternal welfare, by the unbelieving of them: yet, that we should be said to believe in Paul, is that which he did utterly detest; 1 Cor. i. 13. 15.

For the places themselves the reader may consult among others, John i. 12. iii. 16. 18. 36. vi. 29. 35. 41. vii. 38, 39. Acts xiv. 23. xvi. 31. xix. 4. xxiv. 24. xxvi. 18. Rom. iii. 26. ix. 33. x. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 6. 1 John v. 10. 13. There is not one of these but sufficiently confirms the truth. Some few others not named may be briefly insisted on.

John xiv. 1. 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' The distinction made between God and him, limits the name of God unto the person of the Father. Faith is required in them both, and that distinctly; 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' And it is the same faith, of the same kind, to be exercised in the same way and manner, that is required, as is plain in the words. They will not admit of a double faith, of one faith in God, and of another in Christ, or of a distinct way of their exercise.

Wherefore, as faith divine is fixed on, and terminated in, the person of the Father; so is it likewise distinctly in and on the person of the Son; and it was to evidence his divine nature unto them which is the ground and reason of their faith, that he gave his command unto his disciples. This he farther testifies, ver. 9—11. And as unto the exercise of this faith, it respected the relief of their souls under troubles, fears, and disconsolations. 'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.' To believe in him unto the relief of our souls against troubles, is not to assent merely unto the doctrine of the gospel, but also to place our trust and confidence in him, for such supplies of grace, for such an exercise of the acts of divine power, as whereby we may be supported and delivered. And we have herein the whole of what we plead. Divine faith acted distinctly in, and terminated on, the person of Christ; and that with respect unto supplies of grace and mercy from him in a way of divine power.

So he speaks unto Martha, John xi. 25—27. 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.

Believest thou this?' whereunto she answers, 'Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.' His person was the object of her faith, and her belief in him comprised a trust for all spiritual and eternal mercies.

I shall add one more wherein not only the thing itself, but the especial ground and reason of it is declared; Gal. ii. 20. 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' That faith he asserts which is the cause of our spiritual life; that life unto God, which we lead in the flesh, or whilst we are in the body not yet admitted unto sight and enjoyment. Of this faith the Son of God is both the author and the object, the latter whereof is here principally intended. And this is evident from the reason and motive of it, which are expressed. This faith I live by, am in the continual exercise of, because he 'loved me, and gave himself for me.' For this is that which doth powerfully influence our hearts to fix our faith in him and on him. And that person who so loved us, is the same in whom we do believe. If his person was the seat of his own love, it is the object of our faith. And this faith is not only our duty, but our life. He that hath it not, is dead in the sight of God.

But I hope it is not yet necessary to multiply testimonies to prove it our duty to believe in Jesus Christ; that is, to believe in the person of the Son of God; for other faith in Christ there is none, yet I shall add one or two considerations in the confirmation of it.

1st. There is no more necessary hereunto, namely, to prove the person of Christ the Son of God to be the proper and distinct object of faith divine, than what we have already demonstrated concerning the solemn invocation of him. For, saith the apostle, 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' Rom. x. 14. It holds on either side. We cannot, we ought not to call on him in whom we do not, we ought not to believe. And in whom we do believe, on him we ought to call. Wherefore, if it be our duty to call on the name of Christ, it is our duty to believe in the person of Christ. And if to believe in Christ be no more but to believe the doctrine of the gospel which he hath revealed; then every one, whose doctrine we are obliged to believe, on them we ought to call also. And

on this ground we may call on the names of the prophets and apostles, as well as on the name of Jesus Christ, and be saved thereby. But whereas invocation or prayer proceedeth from faith, and that prayer is for mercy, grace, life, and eternal salvation; faith must be fixed on the person so called on as able to give them all unto us, or that prayer is in vain.

2dly. Again, that we are baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, and that distinctly with the Father, is a sufficient evidence of the necessity of faith in his person. For we are therein given up unto universal spiritual subjection of soul unto him, and dependance on him. Not to believe in him, on his name, that is, his person, when we are so given up unto him, or baptized into him, is virtually to renounce him. But to put a present close unto this contest. Faith in Christ is that grace whereby the church is united unto him, incorporated into one mystical body with him. It is thereby that he dwells in them, and they in him. By this alone are all supplies of grace derived from him unto the whole body. Deny his person to be the proper and immediate object of this faith, and all these things are utterly overthrown; that is, the whole spiritual life and eternal salvation of the church.

This faith in the person Christ, which is the foundation of all that divine honour in sacred adoration and invocation which is assigned unto him, may be considered two ways. (1st.) As it respects his person absolutely. (2dly.) As he is considered in the discharge of the office of mediation.

(1st.) In the first sense faith is placed absolutely and ultimately on the person of Christ, even as on the person of the Father. He counts it no robbery herein to be equal with the Father. And the reason hereof is because the divine nature itself is the proper and immediate object of this faith and all the acts of it. This being one and the same in the person of the Father and of the Son, as also of the Holy Spirit, two things do follow thereon. [1st.] That each person is equally the object of our faith, because equally participant of that nature which is the formal reason and object of it. [2dly.] It follows also, that in acting faith on, and ascribing therewithal divine honour unto, any one person, the other are not excluded, yea, they are included therein.

For by reason of the mutual inbeing of the divine persons, in the unity of the same nature, the object of all spiritual worship is undivided. Hence are those expressions of the Scriptures; 'He that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father; he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father, for he and the Father are one.'

And to clear our present design, three things may be observed from hence, namely, that the divine nature, with all its essential properties, is the formal reason, and only ground of divine faith. As,

1st. That the Lord Christ is not the absolute and ultimate object of our faith, any otherwise but under this consideration, of his being partaker of the nature of God, of his being in the form of God, and equal unto him. Without this, to place our faith in him would be robbery and sacrilege; as is all the pretended faith of them, who believe not his divine person.

2dly. There is no derogation from the honour and glory of the Father, not the least diversion of any one signal act of duty from him, nor from the Holy Spirit, by the especial actings of faith on the person of Christ. For all divine honour is given solely unto the divine nature. And this being absolutely the same in each person, in the honouring of one, they are all equally honoured. He that honoureth the Son, he therein honoureth the Father also.

3dly. Hence it appears what is that especial acting of faith on the person of Christ which we intend, and which in the Scripture is given in charge unto us, as indispensably necessary unto our salvation. And there are three things to be considered in it.

(1st.) That his divine nature is the proper formal object of this faith, on the consideration whereof alone, it is fixed on him. If you ask a reason why I believe on the Son of God; if you intend what cause I have for it, what motives unto it, I shall answer, it is because of what he hath done for me, whereof afterward; so doth the apostle, Gal. ii. 20. But if you intend, what is the formal reason, ground, and warranty whereon I thus believe in him, or place my trust and confidence in him, I say it is only this, that he is 'over all God blessed for ever;' and were he not so, I could not

believe in him. For to believe in any, is to expect from him that to be done for me, which none but God can do.

(2dly.) That the entire person of Christ as God and man, is the immediate object of our faith herein. The divine nature is the reason of it; but his divine person is the object of it. In placing our faith on him, we consider him as God and man in one and the same person. We believe in him because he is God; but we believe in him as he is God and man in one person.

And this consideration of the person of Christ, namely, as he is God and man, in our acting of faith on him, is that which renders it peculiar, and limits or determines it unto his person, because he only is so; the Father is not, nor the Holy Spirit. That faith which hath the person of God and man for its object, is peculiarly and distinctly placed on Christ.

(3dly.) The motives unto this distinct acting of faith on his person, are always to be considered, as those also which render this faith peculiar. For the things which Christ hath done for us, which are the motives of our faith in him, were peculiar unto him alone, as in the place before quoted, Gal. ii. 20. Such are all the works of his mediation, with all the fruits of them whereof we are made partakers. So God, in the first command, wherein he requires all faith, love, and obedience from the church, enforced it with the consideration of a signal benefit which it had received, and therein a type of all spiritual and eternal mercies, Exod. xx. 23. Hence two things are evident which clearly state this matter.

[1st.] That faith which we place upon, and the honour which we give thereby unto the person of Christ, is equally placed on, and honour equally given thereby unto the other persons of the Father and the Holy Spirit, with respect unto that nature which is the formal reason and cause of it. But it is peculiarly fixed on Christ, with respect unto his person as God and man, and the motives unto it, in the acts and benefits of his mediation.

[2dly.] All of Christ is considered and glorified in this acting of faith on him. His divine nature, as the formal cause of it; his divine entire person God and man, as its proper object; and the benefits of his mediation, as the especial motives thereunto.

This faith in the person of Christ is the spring and fountain of our spiritual life. We live by the faith of the Son of God. In and by the actings hereof is it preserved, increased, and strengthened. 'For he is our life;' Col. ii. 4. and all supplies of it are derived from him by the actings of faith in him. We receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, 'by the faith that is in him;' Acts xxvi. 18. Hereby do we abide in him, without which we can do nothing; John xv. 5. Hereby is our peace with God maintained. 'For he is our peace;' Eph. ii. 14. And in him we have peace according to his promise, John xvi. 33. all strength for the mortification of sin, for the conquest of temptations, all our increase and growth in grace, depend on the constant actings of this faith in him.

The way and method of this faith is that which we have described. A due apprehension of the love of Christ, with the effects of it in his whole mediatory work on our behalf, especially in his giving himself for us, and our redemption by his blood, is the great motive thereunto. They whose hearts are not deeply affected herewith, can never believe in him in a due manner. 'I live,' saith the apostle, 'by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' Unless a sense hereof be firmly implanted on our souls; unless we are deeply affected with it, our faith in him would be weak and wavering, or rather none at all. The due remembrance of what the blessed Lord Jesus hath done for us; of the ineffable love which was the spring, cause, and fountain of what he so did; thoughts of the mercy, grace, peace, and glory which he hath procured thereby; are the great and unconquerable motives to fix our faith, hope, trust, and confidence in him.

His divine nature is the ground and warranty for our so doing. This is that from whence he is the due and proper object of all divine faith and worship. From the power and virtue thereof do we expect and receive all those things which in our believing on him we seek after; for none but God can bestow them on us, or work them in us. There is in all the actings of our faith on him, the voice of the confession of Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.'

His divine person wherein he is God and man, wherein he hath that nature which is the formal object of divine

worship, and wherein he wrought all those things which are the motives thereunto, is the object of this faith, which gives its difference and distinction from faith in God in general, and faith in the person of the Father, as the fountain of grace, love, and power.

(2dly.) Faith is acted on Christ under the formal notion of mediator between God and man. So it is expressed, 1 Pet. i. 21. 'Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.' And this acting of faith towards Christ, is not contrary unto that before described, nor inconsistent with it, though it be distinct from it. To deny the person of Christ to fall under this double consideration, of a divine person absolutely, wherein he is 'over all, God blessed for ever,' and as manifested in the flesh, exercising the office of mediator between God and man, is to renounce the gospel. And, according unto the variety of these respects, so are the actings of faith various; some on him absolutely, on the motives of his mediation; some on him as mediator only. And how necessary this variety is unto the life, supportment, and comfort of believers, they all know in some measure who are so. See our exposition on Heb. i. 1—3. Sometimes faith considers him as on the throne; sometimes as standing at the right hand of God; sometimes as the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Sometimes his glorious power; sometimes his infinite condescension is their relief.

Wherefore, in the sense now intended, he is considered as the ordinance, as the servant of God 'who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory.' So our faith respects not only his person, but all the acts of his office. It is faith in his blood;' Rom iii, 25. It is the will of God, that we should place our faith and trust in him and them, as the only means of our acceptance with him, of all grace and glory from him. This is the proper notion of a mediator. So is he not the ultimate object of our faith, wherein it rests, but God through him. 'Through him have we an access by one Spirit unto the Father;' Eph. ii. 18. So he is the way whereby we go to God; John xiv. 6. See Heb. x. 19—21. And this also is faith in him, because he is the immediate, though not the ultimate object of it; Acts xxvi. 18.

This is that which renders our faith in God evangelical. The especial nature of it ariseth from our respect unto God in Christ, and through him. And herein faith principally regards Christ in the discharge of his sacerdotal office. For although it is also the principle of all obedience unto him in his other offices, yet as unto fixing our faith in God through him, it is his sacerdotal office and the effects of it, that we rest upon and trust unto. It is through him as the high-priest over the house of God, as he who hath made for us a new and living way into the holy place, that we draw nigh to God; Heb. iv. 14—16. x. 19. 21, 22. 1 John i. 2.

No comfortable refreshing thoughts of God, no warrantable or acceptable boldness in an approach and access unto him, can any one entertain or receive, but in this exercise of faith on Christ as the mediator between God and man. And if in the practice of religion, this regard of faith unto him, this acting of faith on God through him, be not the principle whereby the whole is animated and guided, Christianity is renounced, and the vain cloud of natural religion embraced in the room of it. Not a verbal mention of him, but the real intention of heart to come unto God by him is required of us; and thereinto all expectation of acceptance with God, as unto our persons or duties is resolved.

We have had great endeavours of late by the Socinians to set forth and adorn a natural religion, as if it were sufficient unto all ends of our living unto God. But as most of its pretended ornaments are stolen from the gospel, or are framed in an emanation of light from it, such as nature of itself could not rise unto; so the whole proceeds from a dislike of the mediation of Christ, and even weariness of the profession of faith in him. So is it with the minds of men, who were never affected with supernatural revelations, with the mystery of the gospel, beyond the owning of some notions of truth, who never had experience of its power in the life of God.

But here lies the trial of faith truly evangelical. Its steady beholding of the sun of righteousness proves it genuine and from above. And let them take heed who find their heart remiss or cold in this exercise of it. When men begin to satisfy themselves with general hopes of mercy in

God without a continual respect unto the interposition and mediation of Christ, whereinto their hope and trust is resolved, there is a decay in their faith, and proportionably in all other evangelical graces also. Herein lies the mystery of Christian religion, which the world seems to be almost weary of.

CHAP. XI.

Obedience unto Christ; the nature and causes of it.

ALL holy obedience both internal and external is that which we proposed as the second part of our religious regard unto the person of Christ. His great injunction unto his disciples is, 'That they keep his commandments,' without which, none are so.

Some say the Lord Christ is to be considered as a lawgiver, and the gospel as a new law given by him, whereby our obedience unto him is to be regulated. Some absolutely deny it, and will not grant the gospel in any sense to be a new law. And many dispute about these things, whilst obedience itself is on all hands generally neglected. But this is that wherein our principal concernment doth lie. I shall not therefore at present immix myself in any needless disputations. Those things wherein the nature and necessity of our obedience unto him is concerned, shall be briefly declared.

The law under the Old Testament taken generally had two parts. (1.) The moral preceptive part of it; and, (2.) The institutions of worship appointed for that season. These are jointly and distinctly called the law.

(1.) In respect unto the first of these, the Lord Christ gave no new law, nor was the old abrogated by him, which it must be if another were given in the room of it, unto the same ends. For the introduction of a new law in the place of, and unto the end of a former, is an actual abrogation of it. Neither did he add any new precepts unto it, nor give any counsels for the performance of duties in matter or manner beyond what it prescribed. Any such supposition is con-

trary to the wisdom and holiness of God in giving the law, and inconsistent with the nature of the law itself. For God never required less of us in the law than all that was due unto him. And his prescription of it, included all circumstances and causes that might render any duty at any time necessary in the nature or degrees of it. Whatever at any time may become the duty of any person towards God, in the substance or degrees of it, it is made so by the law. All is included in that summary of it, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Nothing can be the duty of men but what and when it is required by the love of God or our neighbour. Wherefore, no additions were made unto the preceptive part of the law by our Saviour, nor counsels given by him for the performance of more than it did require.

In this regard the gospel is no new law, only the duties of the moral and eternal law, are plainly declared in the doctrine of it, enforced in its motives, and directed as to their manner and end. Nor in this sense did the Lord Christ ever declare himself to be a new lawgiver; yea, he declares the contrary, that he came to confirm the old; Matt. v. 17.

(2.) The law may be considered, as containing the institutions of worship, which were given in Horeb by Moses, with other statutes and judgments. It was in this sense abolished by Christ. For the things themselves were appointed, but unto the time of reformation. And thereon as the supreme Lord and lawgiver of the gospel church, he gave a new law of worship, consisting in several institutions and ordinances of worship thereunto belonging. See Heb. iii. 3—6. and our exposition of that place.

Obedience unto the Lord Christ may be considered with respect unto both these; the moral law which he confirmed, and the law of evangelical worship which he gave and appointed. And some few things may be added to clear the nature of it.

[1.] Obedience unto Christ doth not consist merely in doing the things which he requireth. So far the church under the Old Testament was obliged to yield obedience unto Moses; and we are yet so unto the prophets and apostles. This is done, or may be so, with respect unto any subordinate directive cause of our obedience, when it is not

formally so denominated from his authority. All obedience unto Christ proceeds from an express subjection of our souls and consciences unto him.

[2.] No religious obedience could be due unto the Lord Christ directly, by the rule and command of the moral law, were he not God by nature also. The reason and foundation of all the obedience required therein, is, 'I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me.' This contains the formal reason of all religious obedience. The Socinians pretend highly unto obedience to the precepts of Christ; but all obedience unto Christ himself they utterly overthrow. The obedience they pretend unto him, is but obeying God the Father according to his commands; but they take away the foundation of all obedience unto his person, by denying his divine nature. And all religious obedience unto any, who is not God by nature is idolatry. Wherefore, all obedience unto God, due by the moral law, hath respect unto the person of Christ, as one God with the Father and Holy Spirit, blessed for ever.

[3.] There is a peculiar respect unto him in all moral obedience as mediator.

1st. In that by the supreme authority over the church wherewith he was vested, he hath confirmed all the commands of the moral law, giving them new enforcements, whence he calls them his commands. 'This,' saith he, 'is my commandment, that you love one another,' which yet was the old commandment of the moral law; 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Hence the apostle calls it an old and new commandment; 1 John ii. 7, 8.

This law was given unto the church under the Old Testament in the hand of a mediator, that is, of Moses; Gal. iii. 19. It had an original power of obliging all mankind unto obedience from its first institution or prescription in our creation; which it never lost nor abated in. Howbeit the church was obliged to have a respect unto it, as it was given unto them, 'ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.' See Mal. iv. 4. Hereon many things hard and difficult did ensue, which we are now freed from. We are not obliged unto the observance of the moral law itself, as given in the hand of that mediator, which gave it the formal reason of a covenant unto that people, and had other statutes and judg-

cogency in the apostle's testimony, nor force in his arguing; so he declares that God judgeth us only in and by him. In this regard of our moral obedience unto Christ, lies the way whereby God will be glorified.

[2.] All things are yet more plain with respect unto institutions of divine worship. The appointment of all divine ordinances under the New Testament, was his especial province and work, as the Son and Lord over his own house. And obedience unto him in the observance of them is that which he gives in especial charge unto all his disciples, Matt. xxviii. 18—20. And it is nothing but a loss of that subjection of soul and conscience unto him, which is indispensably required of all believers, that hath set the minds of so many at liberty to do and observe in divine worship what they please, without any regard unto his institutions. It is otherwise with respect unto moral duties. For the things of the moral law, have an obligation on our consciences antecedent unto the enforcement of them by the authority of Christ, and there holds us fast. But as unto things of the latter sort, our consciences can no way be affected with a sense of them, or a necessity of obedience in them, but by the sole and immediate authority of Christ himself. If a sense hereof be lost in our minds, we shall not abide in the observance of his commands.

CHAP. XII.

The especial principle of obedience unto the person of Christ; which is love. Its truth and reality vindicated.

THAT which doth enliven and animate the obedience whereof we have discoursed, is love. This himself makes the foundation of all that is acceptable unto him. 'If,' saith he, 'ye love me, keep my commandments;' John xiv. 15. As he distinguisheth between love and obedience, so he asserts the former as the foundation of the latter. He accepts of no obedience unto his commands, that doth not proceed from love unto his person. That is no love which is not fruitful in obedience, and that is no obedience which proceeds not from love. So he expresseth on both sides. 'If a man love

me, he will keep my words; and he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings;' ver. 23, 24.

In the Old Testament the love of God was the life and substance of all obedience. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, thy mind and strength,' was the sum of the law. This includes in it all obedience, and where it is genuine, will produce all the fruits of it. And where it was not, no multiplication of duties was accepted with him. But this in general we do not now treat of.

That the person of Christ is the especial object of this divine love, which is the fire that kindles the sacrifice of our obedience unto him; this is that alone which at present I design to demonstrate.

The apostle hath recorded a very severe denunciation of divine wrath against all that love him not. 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha;' 1 Cor. xvi. 22. And what was added unto the curse of the law, we may add unto this of the gospel; 'and all the people shall say, Amen;' Deut. xxvii. 26. And on the other hand, he prays for grace on all that 'love him in sincerity;' Eph. ii. 26. Wherefore, none who desire to retain the name of Christians, can deny in words at least, but that we ought with all our hearts to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not so distinguish love from obedience as though it were not itself a part, yea, the chiefest part of our obedience. So is faith also, yet is it constantly distinguished from obedience properly so called. This alone is that which I shall demonstrate, namely, that there is, and ought to be in all believers, a divine, gracious love unto the person of Christ, immediately fixed on him, whereby they are excited unto, and acted in, all their obedience unto his authority. Had it been only pleaded, that many who pretend love unto Christ, do yet evidence that they love him not, it is that which the Scripture testifieth, and continual experience doth proclaim. If an application of this charge had been made unto them whose sincerity in their profession of love unto him can be no way evicted, it ought to be borne with patience, amongst other reproaches of the same kind that are cast upon them. And some things are to be premised unto the confirmation of our assertion.

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1. It is granted, that there may be a false pretence of love unto Christ. And as this pretence is ruinous unto the souls of them in whom it is, so it oft-times renders them prejudicial and troublesome unto others. There ever were, and probably ever will be hypocrites in the church; and a false pretence of love is of the essential form of hypocrisy. The first great act of hypocrisy with respect unto Christ, was treachery veiled with a double pretence of love. He cried, 'Hail, master; and kissed him,' who betrayed him. His words and actions proclaimed love, but deceit and treachery were in his heart. Hence the apostle prays for grace on them who love the Lord Jesus, ἐν ἀφθαρσία; without dissimulation or doubling, without pretences and aims at other ends, without a mixture of corrupt affections; that is sincerity; Eph. vi. 24. It was prophesied of him, that many who were strangers unto his grace, should lie unto him; Psal. xviii. 44. (בני נכר יכחשו לי) feignedly submit or yield feigned obedience unto him. So is it with them who profess love unto him, yet are enemies of his cross, 'whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things;' Phil. iii. 18, 19. All that are called Christians in the world, do, by owning that denomination, profess a love unto Jesus Christ; but greater enemies, greater haters of him he hath not among the children of men, than many of them are. This falsely pretended love, is worse than avowed hatred; neither will the pretence of it stand men in stead at the last day. No other answer will be given unto the plea of it, be it in whom it will, but 'depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity.' Whereas therefore he himself hath prescribed this rule unto all who would be esteemed his disciples, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments;' we may safely conclude all who live in a neglect of his commands, whatever they pretend or profess, they love him not. And the satisfaction which men, through much darkness, and many corrupt prejudices, have attained unto in the profession of Christian religion, without an internal, sincere love unto Christ himself, is that which ruins religion and their own souls.

2. As there is a false pretence of love unto Christ, so there is, or may be, a false love unto him also. The persons in whom it is, may in some measure be sincere, and yet their

love unto Christ may not be pure, nor sincere, such as answers the principles and rules of the gospel. And as many deceive others, so some deceive themselves in this matter. They may think that they love Christ, but indeed do not so. And this I shall manifest in some few instances.

(1.) That love is not sincere and incorrupt, which proceedeth not from, which is not a fruit of faith. Those who do not first really believe on Christ, can never sincerely love him. It is faith alone that worketh by love towards Christ and all his saints. If therefore any do not believe with that faith which unites them unto Christ, which within purifies the heart, and is outwardly effectual in duties of obedience, whatever they may persuade themselves concerning love unto Christ, it is but a vain delusion. Where the faith of men is dead, their love will not be living and sincere.

(2.) That love is not so, which ariseth from false ideas and representations that men make of Christ, or have made of him in their minds. Men may draw images in their minds of what they most fancy, and then doat upon them. So some think of Christ only as a glorious person exalted in heaven at the right hand of God, without farther apprehensions of his natures and offices. So the Roman missionaries represented him unto some of the Indians; concealing from them his cross and sufferings. But every false notion concerning his person or his grace, what he is, hath done, or doth, corrupts the love that is pretended unto him. Shall we think that they love Christ by whom his divine nature is denied? Or that those do so who disbelieve the reality of his human nature? Or those by whom the union of both in the same person is rejected? There cannot be true evangelical love unto a false Christ, such as these imaginations do fancy.

(3.) So is that love, which is not in all things as to causes, motives, measures, and ends, regulated by the Scripture. This alone gives us the nature, rules, and bounds of sincere spiritual love. We are no more to love Christ, than to fear and worship him, according unto our own imaginations. From the Scripture are we to derive all the principles and motives of our love. If either the acts or effects of it will not endure a trial thereby, they are false and counterfeit,

that have pretended unto it, have fallen into such ridiculous excesses and open delusions, as sufficiently discover the vanity of the love itself pretended by them.

Wherefore we plead for no other love unto the person of Christ, but what the Scripture warrants as unto its nature, what the gospel requireth of us as our duty, what the natural faculties of our minds are suited unto, and given us for, what they are enabled unto by grace, and without which in some degree of sincerity, no man can yield acceptable obedience unto him.

These things being premised, that which we assert is, that there is and ought to be in all believers, a religious gracious love unto the person of Christ, distinct from, and the reason of their obedience unto his commands; that is, it is distinct from all other commands; but is also itself commanded and required of us in a way of duty.

That there is in the church such a love unto the person of Christ, the Scripture testifies both in the precepts it gives for it, and the examples of it. And all those who truly believe cannot apprehend that they understand any thing of faith, or love of Christ, or themselves, by whom it is called in question. If therefore I should enlarge on this subject, a great part of the doctrine of the Scripture from first to last must be represented, and a transcript of the hearts of believers, wherein this love is seated and prevalent, be made according to our ability. And there is no subject that I could more willingly enlarge upon. But I must at present contract myself in compliance with my design. Two things only I shall demonstrate: 1. That the person of Christ is the object of divine love. 2. What is the nature of that love in us; what are the grounds of it, and the motives unto it, in them that do believe.

In reference unto the first of these, the ensuing position shall be the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

The person of Christ is the principal object of the love of God, and of the whole creation participant of his image. The reason why I thus extend the assertion, will appear in the declaration of it.

(1.) No small part of the eternal blessedness of the holy God, consisteth in the mutual love of the Father and the Son, by the Spirit. As he is the only-begotten of the

Father, he is the first, necessary, adequate, complete object of the whole love of the Father. Hence he says of himself, that 'from eternity he was by him, as brought up with him, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;' Prov. viii. 30. which place was opened before. In him was the ineffable, eternal, unchangeable delight and complacency of the Father, as the full object of his love. The same is expressed in that description of him, John i. 18. 'The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.' His being the only begotten Son declares his eternal relation unto the person of the Father, of whom he was begotten in the entire communication of the whole divine nature. Hereon he is in the bosom of the Father; in the eternal embraces of his love, as his only begotten Son. The Father loves, and cannot but love, his own nature and essential image in him.

Herein originally is God love. 'For God is love;' 1 John iv. 8. This is the fountain and prototype of all love, as being eternal and necessary. All other acts of love are in God but emanations from hence, and effects of it. As he doth good, because he is good, so he loveth, because he is love. He is love eternally and necessarily in this love of the Son; and all other workings of love are but acts of his will, whereby somewhat of it is outwardly expressed. And all love in the creation was introduced from this fountain, to give a shadow and resemblance of it.

Love is that which contemplative men have always almost adored. Many things have they spoken to evince it to be the light, life, lustre, and glory of the whole creation. But the original and pattern of it was always hid from the wisest philosophers of old. Something they reached after about God's love unto himself, with rest and complacency in his own infinite excellencies. But of this ineffable, mutual love of the Father and the Son, both in and by that Spirit which proceeds from them both, they had neither apprehension nor conjecture. Yet as herein doth the principal part (if we may so speak) of the blessedness of the holy God consist, so is it the only fountain and prototype of all that is truly called love. A blessing and glory which the creation had never been made partaker of, but only to express, ac-

cording to the capacity of their several natures, this infinite and eternal love of God. For God's love of himself, which is natural and necessary unto the Divine Being, consists in the mutual complacency of the Father and the Son by the Spirit. And it was to express himself, that God made any thing without himself. He made the heavens and the earth to express his being, goodness, and power. He created man 'in his own image,' to express his holiness and righteousness; and he implanted love in our natures, to express this eternal mutual love of the holy persons of the Trinity. But we must leave it under the veil of infinite incomprehensibleness; though admiration and adoration of it be not without the highest spiritual satisfaction.

Again, He is the peculiar object of the love of the Father, of the love of God, as he is incarnate, as he hath taken on him, and hath now discharged the work of mediation, or continues in the discharge of it; that is, the person of Christ, as God-man, is the peculiar object of the divine love of the Father. The person of Christ in his divine nature, is the adequate object of that love of the Father which is 'ad intra,' a natural necessary act of the divine essence in its distinct personal existence: and the person of Christ as incarnate, as clothed with human nature, is the first and full object of the love of the Father in those acts of it, which are 'ad extra,' or are towards any thing without himself. So he declares himself in the prospect of his future incarnation and work. 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth;' Isa. xlii. 1. The delight of the soul of God, his rest and complacency, which are the great effects of love, are in the Lord Christ as his elect and servant in the work of mediation. And the testimony hereof he renewed twice from heaven afterward; Matt. iii. 17. 'Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;' as it is again repeated, Matt. xvii. 5. All things are disposed to give a due sense unto us, of this love of God unto him. The testimony concerning it is twice repeated in the same words from heaven. And the words of it are emphatical unto the utmost of our comprehension. 'My Son, my servant, mine elect, my beloved Son in whom I rest, in whom I delight, and am well pleased.' It is the

will of God to leave upon our hearts a sense of this love unto Christ; for his voice came from heaven, not for his sake who was always filled with a sense of this divine love, but for ours, that we might believe it.

This he pleaded as the foundation of all the trust reposed in him, and all the power committed unto him. 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand;' John iii. 35. 'The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth;' John v. 20. And the sense or due apprehension of it, is the foundation of Christian religion. Hence he prays that we may 'know that God hath loved him;' John xvii. 23. 26.

In this sense, the person of Christ is the πρῶτον δεκτικὸν, the first recipient subject of all that divine love which extends itself unto the church. It is all, the whole of it, in the first place fixed upon him, and by and through him is communicated unto the church. Whatever it receives in grace and glory, it is but the streams of this fountain love unto himself. So he prays for all his disciples, 'that the love,' saith he, 'wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them;' John. xvii. 26. They can be partakers of no other love, neither in itself nor in its fruits, but that alone wherewith the Father first loved him. He loveth him for us all, and us no otherwise but as in him. He makes us accepted in the beloved; Eph. i. 6. He is the beloved of the Father, κατ' ἐξοχὴν: as in all things he was to have the pre-eminence; Col. i. 18. The love of the body is derived unto it from the love unto the head. And in the love of him doth God love the whole church and no otherwise. He loves none but as united unto him, and participant of his nature.

Wherefore the love of the Father unto the Son, as the only-begotten, and the essential image of his person, wherein the ineffable delight of the divine nature doth consist, was the fountain and cause of all love in the creation, by an act of the will of God for its representation. And the love of God the Father unto the person of Christ as incarnate, being the first adequate object of divine love, wherein there is any thing 'ad extra,' is the fountain and especial cause of all gracious love towards us and in us. And our love unto Christ being the only outward expression and representation of this love of the Father unto him, therein consists the

principal part of our renovation into his image. Nothing renders us so like unto God as our love unto Jesus Christ, for he is the principal object of his love; in him doth his soul rest, in him is he always well pleased. Wherever this is wanting, whatever there may be besides, there is nothing of the image of God. He that loves not Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha; for he is unlike unto God, his carnal mind is enmity against God.

(2.) Among those who are in the image of God, the angels above are of the first consideration. We are indeed as yet much in the dark unto the things that are 'within the veil.' They are above us as unto our present capacity, and hid from us, as unto our present state; but there is enough in the Scripture to manifest the adhesion of angels unto the person of Christ by divine love. For love proceeding from sight, is the life of the church above; as love proceeding from faith, is the life of the church below. And this life the angels themselves do live. For,

[1.] They were all unto their inexpressible present advantage and security for the future, brought into that recovery and recapitulation of all things which God hath made in him. He hath 'gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him;' Eph. i. 10. The things in heaven, and things in earth, angels above, and men below, were originally united in the love of God. God's love unto them, whence springs their mutual love between themselves, was a bond of union between them, rendering them one complete family of God in heaven and earth, as it is called, Eph. iii. 15. On the entrance of sin, whereby mankind forfeited their interest in the love of God, and lost all love unto him, or any thing for him, this union was utterly dissolved, and mutual enmity came into the place of its principle in love. God is pleased to gather up these divided parts of his family into one, in one head, which is Christ Jesus. And as there is hereby a union established again between angels and the church in love, so their adherence unto the head, the centre, life, and spring of this union, is by love and no otherwise. It is not faith, but love that is the bond of this union between Christ and them; and herein no small part of their blessedness and glory in heaven doth consist.

[2.] That worship, adoration, service, and obedience which they yield unto him, are all in like manner animated with love and delight. In love they cleave unto him, in love they worship and serve him. They had a command to worship him on his nativity, Heb. i. 6. and they did it with joy, exultation, and praises, all effects of love and delight; Luke ii. 13, 14. And as they continue about the throne of God, they say, with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing;' Rev. v. 11, 12. Their continual ascription of glory and praise unto him, is an effect of reverential love and delight; and from thence also is their concernment in his gospel and grace; Eph. iii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. i. 12. Nor without this love in the highest degree, can it be conceived how they should be blessed and happy in their continual employment. For they are 'all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation;' Heb. i. 14. Were they not acted herein by their fervent love unto Christ, they could have no delight in their own ministry.

We have not, we cannot have in this world, a full comprehension of the nature of angelical love. Our notions are but dark and uncertain in things whereof we can have no experience. Wherefore, we cannot have here a clear intuition into the nature of the love of spirits, whilst our own is mixed with what derives from the actings of the animal spirits of our bodies also. But the blessedness of angels doth not consist in the endowments of their nature, that they are great in power, light, knowledge, and wisdom; for, notwithstanding these things, many of them became devils. But the excellency and blessedness of the angelical state consist in these two things:

1st. That they are disposed, and able constantly, inseparably, universally, uninterruptedly to cleave unto God in love. And as they do so unto God, so they do unto the person of Christ, and through him as their head unto God, even the Father.

2dly. Add hereunto that gracious reflex sense which they have of the glory, dignity, eternal sweetness, and satisfaction which ariseth from hence, and we have the sum of angelical blessedness.

(3.) The church of mankind is the other part of the rational creation whereon the image of God is renewed. Love unto the person of Christ proceeding from faith, is their life, their joy and glory.

It was so unto the church under the Old Testament. The whole book of Canticles is designed to no other purpose, but variously to shadow forth, to insinuate and represent the mutual love of Christ and the church. Blessed is he who understands the sayings of that book, and hath the experience of them in his heart. The forty-fifth Psalm, among others, is designed unto the same purpose. All the glorious descriptions which are given of his person in the residue of the prophets, were only means to excite love unto him, and desires after him. Hence is he called חמדת כל הגוים, Hag. ii. 7. 'The desire of all nations.' He alone who is desirable unto, and the only beloved of the church, gathered out of all nations.

The clear revelation of the person of Christ, so as to render him the direct object of our love, with the causes and reasons of it, is one of the most eminent privileges of the New Testament. And it is variously attested in precepts, promises, instances, and solemn approbations.

Wherever he supposeth or requireth this love in any of his disciples, it is not only as their duty, as that which they were obliged unto by the precepts of the gospel, but as that without which no other duty whatever is accepted by him. 'If,' saith he, 'ye love me, keep my commandments;' John xiv. 15. He so requires love unto himself, as not to expect or approve of any obedience unto his commands without it. It is a great and blessed duty to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ; yet will not he accept of it unless it proceeds out of love unto his person. 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? feed my lambs;' John xxi. 15—17. Three times did he repeat the same words to him who had failed in his love towards him by denying him thrice. Without this love unto him, he requires of none to feed his sheep, nor will accept of what they pretend to do therein. It were a blessed thing, if a due apprehension hereof did always abide with them that are called unto that work.

Hereunto doth he annex those blessed promises which comprise the whole of our peace, safety, and consolation in

this world. 'He,' saith he, 'that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him;' John xiv. 21. and ver. 23. 'My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' What heart can conceive, what tongue can express, the glory of these promises, or the least part of the grace that is contained in them? Who can conceive aright of the divine condescension, love, and grace that are expressed in them? How little a portion is it that we know of God in these things? But if we value them not, if we labour not for an experience of them according unto our measure, we have neither lot nor portion in the gospel. The presence and abode of God with us as a Father manifesting himself to be such unto us, in the infallible pledges and assurances of our adoption; the presence of Christ with us, revealing himself unto us, with all those ineffable mercies wherewith these things are accompanied, are all contained in them. And these promises are peculiarly given unto them that love the person of Christ, and in the exercise of love towards him.

Hereunto are designed the gospel Gerazim and Ebal, the denunciation of blessings and curses. As blessings are declared to be their portion, 'who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity;' Eph. vi. 24. so those who love him not, have the substance of all curses denounced against them, even 'Anathema Maranatha;' 1 Cor. xvi. 22. So far shall such persons be, whatever they may profess of outward obedience unto the gospel, from any blessed interest in the promises of it, as that they are justly liable unto final excision from the church in this world, and eternal malediction in that which is to come.

It is evident, therefore, that the love of the church, of believers, unto the person of Christ, is not a distempered fancy, not a deluding imagination, as some have blasphemed, but that which the nature of their relation unto him makes necessary; that wherein they express their renovation into the image of God, that which the Scripture indispensably requires of them, and whereon all their spiritual comforts do depend. These things being spoken in general, the particular nature, effects, operations, and motives of this divine love, must now be farther inquired into.

CHAP. XIII.

The nature, operations, and causes of divine love, as it respects the person of Christ.

THAT we may the better understand that love unto the person of Christ which we plead for, some things must be premised concerning the nature of divine love in general, and thereon its application unto the particular actings and exercise of it which we inquire into, will be plain and easy.

God hath endowed our nature with a faculty and ability of fixing our love upon himself. Many can understand nothing of love, but the adherence of their minds and souls unto things visible and sensible, capable of a present natural enjoyment. For things unseen, especially such as are eternal and infinite, they suppose they have a veneration, a religious respect, a devout adoration; but how they should love them, they cannot understand. And the apostle doth grant that there is a greater difficulty in loving things that cannot be seen, than in loving those which are always visibly present unto us; 1 John iv. 20. Howbeit this divine love hath a more fixed station and prevalency in the minds of men, than any other kind of love whatever. For,

1. The principal end why God endued our natures with that great and ruling affection, that hath the most eminent and peculiar power and interest in our souls, was in the first place, that it might be fixed on himself, that it might be the instrument of our adherence unto him. He did not create this affection in us, that we might be able by it to cast ourselves into the embraces of things natural and sensual. No affection hath such power in the soul to cause it to cleave unto its object, and to work it into a conformity unto it. Most other affections are transient in their operations, and work by a transport of nature, as anger, joy, fear, and the like; but love is capable of a constant exercise, is a spring unto all other affections, and unites the soul with an efficacy not easy to be expressed unto its object. And shall we think that God, who made all things for himself, did create this ruling affection in and with our natures,

merely that we might be able to turn from him, and cleave unto other things, with a power and faculty above any we have of adherence unto him? Wherefore, at our first creation, and in our primitive condition, love was the very soul and quickening principle of the life of God, and on our adherence unto him thereby, the continuance of our relation unto him, did depend. The law, rule, and measure of it was, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul.' For this end did God create this affection in us. Not only our persons in their nature and being, but in all their powers and faculties, were fitted and prepared unto this end, of living unto God, and coming unto the enjoyment of him. And all their exercise on created objects was to be directed unto this end. Wherefore, the placing of our love on any thing before God, or above him, is a formal expression of our apostacy from him.

2. Divine excellencies are a proper adequate object of our love. The will indeed can adhere unto nothing in love, but what the understanding apprehends as unto its truth and being; but it is not necessary that the understanding do fully comprehend the whole nature of that which the will doth so adhere unto. Where a discovery is made unto and by the mind of real goodness and amiableness, the will there can close with its affections. And these are apprehended as absolutely the most perfect in the divine nature and holy properties of it. Whereas therefore not only that which is the proper object of love is in the divine excellencies, but it is there only perfectly and absolutely, without the mixture of any thing that should give it an allay, as there is in all creatures, they are the most suitable and adequate object of our love.

There is no greater discovery of the depravation of our natures by sin, and degeneracy of our wills from their original rectitude, than that whereas we are so prone to the love of other things, and therein do seek for satisfaction unto our souls, where it is not to be obtained, it is so hard and difficult to raise our hearts unto the love of God. Were it not for that depravation, he would always appear as the only suitable and satisfactory object unto our affections.

3. The especial object of divine, gracious love, is the divine goodness. 'How great is his goodness, how great is

his beauty!' Zech. ix. 17. Nothing is amiable, or a proper object of love, but what is good, and as it is so. Hence divine goodness, which is infinite, hath an absolutely perfect amiableness accompanying of it. Because his goodness is inexpressible, his beauty is so. 'How great is his goodness, how great is his beauty!' Hence are we called to give thanks unto the Lord, and to rejoice in him, which are the effects of love, because he is good; Psal. cvi. 1. cxxxvi. 1.

Neither is divine goodness the especial object of our love as absolutely considered. But we have a respect unto it, as comprehensive of all that mercy, grace, and bounty, which are suited to give us the best relief in our present condition, and an eternal future reward. Infinite goodness exerting itself in all that mercy, grace, faithfulness, and bounty, which are needful unto our relief and blessedness in our present condition, is the proper object of our love. Whereas therefore this is done only in Christ, there can be no true love of the divine goodness, but in and through him alone.

The goodness of God as a creator, preserver, and rewarder, was a sufficient, yea, the adequate object of all love antecedently unto the entrance of sin and misery. In them, in God, under those considerations might the soul of man find full satisfaction as unto its present and future blessedness. But since the passing of sin, misery, and death upon us, our love can find no amiableness in any goodness, no rest, complacency, and satisfaction in any, but what is effectual in that grace and mercy by Christ, which we stand in need of, for our present recovery and future reward. Nor doth God require of us that we should love him otherwise but as he 'is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.' So the apostle fully declares it: 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him;' 1 John iv. 9, 10. 16. God is love, of a nature infinitely good and gracious, so as to be the only object of all divine love. But this love can no way be

known, or be so manifested unto us, as that we may and ought to love him, but by his love in Christ, his sending of him, and loving us in him. Before this, without this, we do not, we cannot love God. For 'herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' This is the cause, the spring and fountain of all our love to him. They are but empty notions and imaginations, which some speculative persons please themselves withal, about love unto the divine goodness absolutely considered. For however infinitely amiable it may be in itself, it is not so really unto them, it is not suited unto their state and condition, without the consideration of the communications of it unto us in Christ.

4. These things being premised, we may consider the especial nature of this divine love, although I acknowledge that the least part of what believers have an experience of in their own souls, can be expressed at least by me. Some few things I shall mention, which may give us a shadow of it, but not the express image of the thing itself.

(1.) Desire of union and enjoyment is the first vital act of this love. The soul, upon the discovery of the excellencies of God, earnestly desires to be united unto them, to be brought near unto that enjoyment of them whereof it is capable, and wherein alone it can find rest and satisfaction. This is essential unto all love; it unites the mind unto its object, and rests not but in enjoyment. God's love unto us ariseth out of the overflowing of his own immense goodness, whereof he will communicate the fruits and effects unto us. God is love, and herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his only-begotten Son. Yet also doth this love of God tend to the bringing of us unto him, not that he may enjoy us, but that he may be enjoyed by us. This answers the desire of enjoyment in us Job xiv. 15. 'Thou shalt call me' (that is, out of the dust at the last day), 'thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands.' God's love will not rest, until it hath brought us unto himself. But our love unto God ariseth from a sense of our own wants, our insufficiency to come unto rest in ourselves, or to attain unto blessedness by our own endeavours. In this state seeing all in God, and expecting all from the suitableness of his excellencies unto our rest and satisfaction, our souls

cleave unto them, with a desire of the nearest union whereof our natures are capable. We are made for him, and cannot rest until we come unto him.

Our goodness extends not unto God; we cannot profit him by any thing that we are, or can do. Wherefore, his love unto us hath not respect originally unto any good in ourselves, but is a gracious, free act of his own. He doth good for no other reason but because he is good. Nor can his infinite perfections take any cause for their original actings without himself. He wants nothing that he would supply by the enjoyment of us. But we have indigency in ourselves to cause our love to seek an object without ourselves. And so his goodness, with the mercy, grace, and bounty included therein is the cause, reason, and object of our love. We love them for themselves; and because we are wanting and indigent, we love them with a desire of union and enjoyment wherein we find that our satisfaction and blessedness doth consist. Love in general unites the mind unto the object, the person loving unto the thing or person beloved. So is it expressed in an instance of human, temporary, changeable love, namely, that of Jonathan to David. 'His soul was knit to the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul; 1 Sam. xviii. 1. Love had so effectually united them, as that the soul of David was as his own. Hence are those expressions of this divine love, by 'cleaving unto God, following hard after him, thirsting, panting after him,' with the like intimations of the most earnest endeavours of our nature after union and enjoyment.

When the soul hath a view by faith (which nothing else can give it) of the goodness of God as manifested in Christ, that is, of the essential excellencies of his nature as exerting themselves in him, it reacheth after him with its most earnest embraces, and is restless until it comes unto perfect fruition. It sees in God, the fountain of life, and would drink of the 'river of his pleasures;' Psal. xvi. 8, 9. that in his 'presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore;' Psal. xvi. 11. It longs and pants to drink of that fountain, to bathe itself in that river of pleasures; and wherein it comes short of present enjoyment, it lives in hopes that when we 'awake, it shall be satisfied with his likeness;' Psal. xvii. 15. There is nothing grievous

unto a soul filled with this love, but what keeps it from the full enjoyment of these excellencies of God. What doth so; naturally and necessarily it groans under. Such is our present state in the body, wherein in some sense we are 'absent from the Lord;' 2 Cor. v. 4. 8, 9. And what doth so morally in the deviations of its will and affections, as sin, it hates and abhors, and loaths itself for. Under the conduct of this love, the whole tendency of the soul is unto the enjoyment of God; it would be lost in itself, and found in him; nothing in itself, and all in him. Absolute complacency herein, that God is what he is, that he should be what he is, and nothing else, and that as such we may be united unto him, and enjoy him according to the capacity of our natures, is the life of divine love.

(2.) It is a love of assimilation. It contains in it a desire and intense endeavour to be like unto God, according unto our capacity and measure. The soul sees all goodness, and consequently all that is amiable and lovely in God, the want of all which it finds in itself. The fruition of his goodness is that which it longs for as its utmost end, and conformity unto it as the means thereof. There is no man who loves not God sincerely, but indeed he would have him to be somewhat that he is not, that he might be the more like unto him. This such persons are pleased withal whilst they can fancy it in any thing; Psal. l. 21. They that love him, would have him be all that he is, as he is, and nothing else, and would be themselves like unto him. And as love hath this tendency, and is that which gives disquietment unto the soul when and wherein we are unlike unto God, so it stirs up constant endeavours after assimilation unto him, and hath a principal efficacy unto that end. Love is the principle that actually assimilates and conforms us unto God, as faith is the principle which originally disposeth thereunto. In our renovation into the image of God, the transforming power is radically seated in faith, but acts itself by love. Love proceeding from faith, gradually changeth the soul into the likeness of God; and the more it is in exercise, the more is that change effected.

To labour after conformity unto God by outward actions only, is to make an image of the living God, hewed out of the stock of a dead tree. It is from this vital principle of love

that we are not forced into it as by engines, but naturally grow up into the likeness and image of God. For when it is duly affected with the excellencies of God in Christ, it fills the mind with thoughts and contemplations on them, and excites all the affections unto a delight in them. And where the soul acts itself constantly in the mind's contemplation, and the delight of the affections, it will produce assimilation unto the object of them. To love God is the only way and means to be like unto him.

(3.) It is a love of complacency, and therein of benevolence. Upon that view which we have by spiritual light and faith of the divine goodness, exerting itself in the way before described, our souls do approve of all that is in God, applaud it, adore it, and acquiesce in it. Hence two great duties do arise, and hereon do they depend. First, Joyful ascriptions of glory and honour unto God. All praise and thanksgiving, all blessing, all assignation of glory unto him, because of his excellencies and perfections, do arise from our satisfactory complacence in them. 'The righteous rejoice in the Lord, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness;' Psal. xcvii. 12. They are so pleased and satisfied at the remembrance of God's holiness, that it fills their hearts with joy, and causeth them to break forth in praises. Praise is nothing but an outward expression of the inward complacency of our hearts in the divine perfections and their operations. And, secondly, Love herein acts itself by benevolence, or the constant inclination of the mind unto all things, wherein the glory of God is concerned. It wills all the things wherein the name of God may be sanctified, his praises made glorious, and his will done in earth as it is in heaven. As God says of his own love unto us, 'that he rejoiceth in it with singing, and resteth in it;' Zeph. iii. 17. as having the greatest complacency in it, rejoicing over us with his 'whole heart and his whole soul;' Jer. xxxii. 41. so according unto our measure, do we by love rest in the glorious excellencies of God, rejoicing in them, with our whole hearts and our whole souls.

(4.) This divine love is a love of friendship. The communion which we have with God therein, is so intimate and accompanied with such spiritual boldness, as gives it that denomination. So Abraham was called the 'friend of God,'

Isa. xli. 8. James ii. 23. And because of that mutual trust which is between friends, 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant;' Psal. xxv. 14. For as our Saviour teacheth us, servants, that is, those who are so, and no more, 'know not what their Lord doth;' he rules them, commands them, or requires obedience from them. But as unto his secret, his design and purpose, his counsel and love, they know nothing of it. But saith he unto his disciples, 'I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you;' John xv. 15. He proves them to be rightly called his friends, because of the communication of the secret of his mind unto them.

This is the great difference between them who are only servants in the house of God, and those who are so servants as to be friends also. The same commands are given unto all equally, and the same duties are required of all equally, inasmuch as they are equally servants. But those who are no more but so, know nothing of the secret counsel, love, and grace of God, in a due manner. For the natural man receiveth not the things that are of God. Hence all their obedience is servile. They know neither the principal motives unto it, nor the ends of it. But they who are so servants as to be friends also, they know what their Lord doth; the secret of the Lord is with them, and he shews them of his covenant. They are admitted into an intimate acquaintance with the mind of Christ, ('we have the mind of Christ;' 1 Cor. ii. 16.) and are thereon encouraged to perform the obedience of servants with the love and delight of friends.

The same love of friendship is expressed by that intimate converse with, and especial residence that is between God and believers; God dwelleth in them, and they dwell in God, for God is love; 1 John iv. 16. 'If a man,' saith the Lord Christ, 'love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him;' John xiv. 23. 'And if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me;' Rev. iii. 20. These are not empty sound of words; there is substance under them, there is truth in them. Those whose hearts are duly exercised in and unto the love of God, have experience of the refreshing

approaches both of the Father and of the Son unto their souls, in the communications of a sense of their love, and pledges of their abode with them.

These things have I briefly premised concerning the nature of divine love, that we may the better apprehend what we understand by it, in the application of it unto the person of Christ. For,

[1.] The formal object of this love, is the essential properties of the divine nature, its infinite goodness in particular. Wherever these are, there is the object and reason of this love. But they are all of them in the person of the Son, no less than in the person of the Father. As therefore we love the Father on this account, so are we to love the Son also. But,

[2.] The person of Christ is to be considered as he was incarnate or clothed with our nature. And this takes nothing off from the formal reason of this love, but only makes an addition unto the motives of it. This indeed for a season veiled the loveliness of his divine excellencies, and so turned aside the eyes of many from him, For when he took on him 'the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation,' he had unto them who looked on him with carnal eyes, 'neither form nor comeliness' that he should be desired or beloved. Howbeit the entire person of Christ, God and man, is the object of this divine love, in all the acts of the whole exercise of it. That single effect of infinite wisdom and grace in the union of the divine and human natures, in the one person of the Son of God, renders him the object of this love in a peculiar manner. The way whereby we may attain this peculiar love, and the motives unto it, shall close these considerations.

A due consideration of, and meditation on the proposal of the person of Christ unto us in the Scripture, are the proper foundation of this love. This is the formal reason of our faith in him, and love unto him. He is so proposed unto us in the Scripture that we may believe in him, and love him, and for that very end. And in particular with respect unto our love, to ingenerate it in us, and to excite it unto its due exercise, are those excellencies of his person as the principal effect of divine wisdom and goodness, which we have before insisted on, frequently proposed unto us.

To this end is he represented as altogether lovely, and the especial glories of his person are delineated, yea, drawn to the life, in the holy records of the Old and New Testaments. It is no work of fancy or imagination; it is not the feigning images in our minds of such things as are meet to satisfy our carnal affections, to excite and act them; but it is a due adherence unto that object which is represented unto faith in the proposal of the gospel. Therein as in a glass do we behold the glory of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, and have our souls filled with transforming affections unto him.

The whole book of Canticles is nothing but a mystical declaration of the mutual love between Christ and the church. And it is expressed by all such ways and means as may represent it intense, fervent, and exceeding all other love whatever, which none I suppose will deny, at least on the part of Christ. And a great part of it consists in such descriptions of the person of Christ and his love, as may render him amiable and desirable unto our souls, even altogether lovely. To what end doth the Holy Spirit so graphically describe and represent unto us the beauty and desirableness of his person, if it be not to ingenerate love in us unto him? All want of love unto him on this proposal, is the effect of prevalent unbelief. It is pretended that the descriptions given of Christ in this book are allegorical, from whence nothing can be gathered or concluded. But God forbid we should so reflect on the wisdom and love of the Holy Spirit unto the church, that he hath proposed unto the faith of the church an empty sound and noise of words, without mind or sense. The expressions he useth are figurative, and the whole nature of the discourse as unto its outward structure is allegorical. But the things intended are real and substantial, and the metaphors used in the expression of them are suited in a due attendance unto the analogy of faith, to convey a spiritual understanding and sense of the things themselves proposed in them. The church of God will not part with the unspeakable advantage and consolation, those supports of faith, and incentives of love, which it receives by that divine proposal of the person of Christ, and his love which is made therein, because some men have no experience of them, nor understanding in them.

The faith and love of believers is not to be regulated by the ignorance and boldness of them who have neither the one nor the other. The title of the forty-fifth Psalm is, שיר, ידידות 'A song of loves;' that is, of the mutual love of Christ and the church. And unto this end, that our souls may be stirred up unto the most ardent affections towards him, is a description given us of his person, as altogether lovely. To what other end is he so evidently delineated in the whole harmony of his divine beauties by the pencil of the Holy Spirit?

Not to insist on particular testimonies, it is evident unto all whose eyes are opened to discern these things, that there is no property of the divine nature which is peculiarly amiable, such as are goodness, grace, love, and bounty, with infinite power and holiness, but it is represented and proposed unto us in the person of the Son of God, to this end, that we should love him above all, and cleave unto him. There is nothing in the human nature, in that fulness of grace and truth which dwelt therein, in that inhabitation of the Spirit which was in him without measure, in any thing of those 'all things' wherein he hath the pre-eminence, nothing in his love, condescension, grace, and mercy, nothing in the work that he fulfilled, what he did and suffered therein, nothing in the benefits we receive thereby, nothing in the power and glory that he is exalted unto at the right hand of God, but it is set forth in the Scripture and proposed unto us, that believing in him we may love him with all our hearts and souls. And besides all this, that singular, that infinite effect of divine wisdom, whereunto there is nothing like in all the works of God, and wherewith none of them may be compared, namely, the constitution of his person by the union of his natures therein, whereby he becomes unto us the image of the invisible God, and wherein all the blessed excellencies of his distinct natures are made most illustriously conspicuous, in becoming one entire principle of all his mediatory operations on our behalf, is proposed unto us as the complete object of our faith and love. This is that person, whose loveliness and beauty all the angels of God, all the holy ones above do eternally admire and adore. In him are the infinite treasures of divine wisdom and goodness continually represented unto them. This is he, who is

the joy, the delight, the love, the glory of the church below. 'Thou whom our souls do love,' is the title whereby they know him and converse with him, Cant. i. 7. iii. 1. 4. This is he who is the desire of all nations, the beloved of God and men.

The mutual intercourse on this ground of love between Christ and the church, is the life and soul of the whole creation; for on the account hereof all things consist in him.

There is more glory under the eye of God, in the sighs, groans, and mournings of poor souls filled with the love of Christ, after the enjoyment of him according to his promises, in their fervent prayers for his manifestation of himself unto them, in the refreshments and unspeakable joys which they have in his gracious visits and embraces of his love, than in the thrones and diadems of all the monarchs on the earth. Nor will they themselves part with the ineffable satisfactions which they have in these things, for all that this world can do for them, or unto them. 'Mallem suere cum Christo, quam regnare cum Cæsare.' These things have not only rendered prisons and dungeons more desirable unto them than the most goodly palaces on future accounts; but have made them really places of such refreshment and joys, as men shall seek in vain to extract out of all the comforts that this world can afford.

O curvæ in terris animæ et cœlestium inanes.

Many there are who not comprehending, not being affected with that divine, spiritual description of the person of Christ which is given us by the Holy Ghost in the Scripture, do feign unto themselves false representations of him by images and pictures, so to excite carnal and corrupt affections in their minds. By the help of their outward senses, they reflect on their imaginations the shape of a human body, cast into postures and circumstances dolorous or triumphant, and so by the working of their fancy raise a commotion of mind in themselves, which they suppose to be love unto Christ. But all these idols are teachers of lies. The true beauty and amiableness of the person of Christ, which is the formal object and cause of divine love, is so far from being represented herein, as that the mind is thereby wholly diverted from the contemplation of it.

For no more can be so pictured unto us, but what may belong unto a mere man, and what is arbitrarily referred unto Christ, not by faith, but by corrupt imagination.

The beauty of the person of Christ as represented in the Scripture, consists in things invisible unto the eyes of flesh. They are such as no hand of man can represent or shadow. It is the eye of faith alone that can see this king in his beauty. What else can contemplate on the uncreated glories of his divine nature? Can the hand of man represent the union of his natures in the same person, wherein he is peculiarly amiable? What eye can discern the mutual communications of the properties of his different natures in the same person which depends thereon, whence it is that God laid down his life for us, and purchased his church with his own blood? In these things, O vain man, doth the loveliness of the person of Christ unto the souls of believers consist, and not in those strokes of art which fancy hath guided a skilful hand and pencil unto. And what eye of flesh can discern the inhabitation of the Spirit in all fulness in the human nature? Can his condescension, his love, his grace, his power, his compassion, his offices, his fitness and ability to save sinners, be deciphered on a tablet, or engraven on wood or stone? However such pictures may be adorned, however beautified and enriched, they are not that Christ which the soul of the spouse doth love; they are not any means of representing his love unto us, or of conveying our love unto him; they only divert the minds of superstitious persons from the Son of God, unto the embraces of a cloud, composed of fancy and imagination.

Others there are who abhor these idols, and when they have so done, commit sacrilege. As they reject images, so they seem to do all love unto the person of Christ, distinct from other acts of obedience, as a fond imagination. But the most superstitious love unto Christ, that is, love acted in ways tainted with superstition, is better than none at all. But with what eyes do such persons read the Scriptures? With what hearts do they consider them? What do they conceive is the intention of the Holy Ghost in all those descriptions which he gives us of the person of Christ as amiable and desirable above all things, making therewithal a proposal of him unto our affections, inciting us to receive

him by faith, and to cleave unto him in love? Yea to what end is our nature endued with this affection? Unto what end is the power of it renewed in us by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, if it may not be fixed on this most proper and excellent object of it?

This is the foundation of our love unto Christ, namely, the revelation and proposal of him unto us in the Scripture as altogether lovely. The discovery that is made therein of the glorious excellencies and endowments of his person, of his love, his goodness and grace, of his worth and work, is that which engageth the affections of believers unto him. It may be said, that if there be such a proposal of him made unto all promiscuously, then all would equally discern his amiableness, and be affected with it, who assent equally unto the truth of that revelation. But it hath always fallen out otherwise. In the days of his flesh, some that looked on him could see neither 'form nor comeliness' in him wherefore he should be desired? Others saw his glory, 'the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' To some he is precious, unto others he is disallowed and rejected; a stone which the builders refused, when others brought it forth, crying, Grace, grace unto it, as the head of the corner. Some can see nothing but weakness in him; unto others the wisdom and power of God do evidently shine forth in him. Wherefore it must be said, that notwithstanding that open plain representation that is made of him in the Scripture, unless the Holy Spirit gives us eyes to discern it, and circumcise our hearts, by the cutting off corrupt prejudices, and all effects of unbelief, implanting in them by the efficacy of his grace this blessed affection of love unto him, all these things will make no impression on our minds.

As it was with the people on the giving of the law; notwithstanding all the great and mighty works which God had wrought among them, yet having not given them 'a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear,' which he affirms that he had not done, Deut. xxix. 4. they were not moved unto faith or obedience by them. So is it in the preaching of the gospel. Notwithstanding all the blessed revelation that is made of the excellencies of the person of Christ therein, yet those into whose hearts God doth not

shine to give the knowledge of his glory in his face, can discern nothing of it, nor are their hearts affected with it.

We do not therefore in these things, follow cunningly devised fables: we do not indulge unto our own fancies and imaginations; they are not unaccountable raptures or ecstacies which are pretended unto; nor such an artificial concatenation of thoughts, as some ignorant of these things do boast that they can give an account of: our love to Christ ariseth alone from the revelation that is made of him in the Scripture, is ingenerated, regulated, measured, and is to be judged thereby.

CHAP. XIV.

Motives unto the love of Christ.

THE motives unto this love of Christ, is the last thing on this head of our religious respect unto him, that I shall speak unto.

When God required of the church the first and highest act of religion, the sole foundation of all others, namely, to take him as their God, to own, believe, and trust in him alone as such, which is wholly due unto him for what he is, without any other consideration whatever; yet he thought meet to add a motive unto the performance of that duty from what he had done for them; Exod. xx. 1, 2. The sense of the first command is, that we should take him alone for our God; for he is so, and there is no other. But in the prescription of this duty unto the church, he minds them of the benefits which they had received from him, in bringing them out of the house of bondage.

God in his wisdom and grace ordereth all the causes and reasons of our duty, so as that all the rational powers and faculties of our souls may be exercised therein. Wherefore he doth not only propose himself unto us, nor is Christ merely proposed unto us as the proper object of our affections, but he calls us also unto the consideration of all those

things that may satisfy our souls that it is the most just, necessary, reasonable, and advantageous course for us so to fix our affections on him.

And these considerations are taken from all that he did for us, with the reasons and grounds why he did it. We love him principally and ultimately for what he is; but nextly and immediately for what he did. What he did for us, is first proposed unto us, and it is that which our souls are first affected withal. For they are originally acted in all things by a sense of the want which they have, and a desire of the blessedness which they have not. This directs them unto what he hath done for sinners. But that leads immediately unto the consideration of what he is in himself. And when our love is fixed on him, or his person, then all those things wherewith from a sense of our own wants and desires we were first affected, become motives unto the confirming and increasing of that love. This is the constant method of the Scripture; it first proposeth unto us what the Lord Christ hath done for us, especially in the discharge of his sacerdotal office, in his oblation and intercession, with the benefits which we receive thereby. Hereby it leads us unto his person, and presseth the consideration of all other things to engage our love unto him. See Phil. ii. 5—10. with chap. iii. 8—11.

Motives unto the love of Christ are so great, so many, so diffused through the whole dispensation of God in him unto us, as that they can by no hand be fully expressed, let it be allowed never so much to enlarge in the declaration of them; much less can they be represented in that short discourse whereof but a very small part is allotted unto their consideration, such as ours is at present. The studying, the collection of them, or so many of them as we are able, the meditation on them, and improvement of them, is among the principal duties of our whole lives. What I shall offer is the reduction of them unto these two heads: 1. The acts of Christ, which is the substance of them: And, 2. The spring and fountain of those acts, which is the life of them.

1. In general they are all the acts of his mediatory office, with all the fruits of them whereof we are made partakers. There is not any thing that he did or doth in the discharge

of his mediatory office, from the first susception of it in his incarnation in the womb of the blessed Virgin, unto his present intercession in heaven, but is an effectual motive unto the love of him, and as such is proposed unto us in the Scripture. Whatever he did or doth with or towards us in the name of God, as the king and prophet of the church, whatever he did or doth with God for us as our high-priest, it all speaks this language in the hearts of them that believe; O love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

The consideration of what Christ thus did and doth for us, is inseparable from that of the benefits which we receive thereby. A due mixture of both these, of what he did for us, and what we obtain thereby, compriseth the substance of these motives. 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me. Who loved us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God. For thou wast slain, and hast bought us unto God with thy blood.' And both these are of a transcendant nature, requiring our love to be so also. Who is able to comprehend the glory of the mediatory actings of the Son of God, in the assumption of our nature, in what he did and suffered therein? And for us, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive, what we receive thereby. The least benefit, and that obtained by the least expense of trouble or charge, deserveth love, and leaveth the brand of a crime, where it is not so entertained. What then do the greatest deserve, and those procured by the greatest expense; even the price of the blood of the Son of God?

If we have any faith concerning these things, it will produce love, as that love will obedience. Whatever we profess concerning them, it springs from tradition and opinion, and not from faith, if it engage not our souls into the love of him. The frame of heart which ensues on the real faith of these things, is expressed, Psal. ciii. 1—5. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.' Let men pretend what they will

there needs no greater, no other evidence, to prove that any one doth not really believe the things that are reported in the gospel, concerning the mediatory actings of Christ, or that he hath no experience in his own soul and conscience of the fruits and effects of them, than this, that his heart is not engaged by them unto the most ardent love towards his person.

He is no Christian who lives not much in the meditation of the mediation of Christ, and the especial acts of it. Some may more abound in that work than others, as it is fixed, formed, and regular. Some may be more able than others to dispose their thoughts concerning them, into method and order. Some may be more diligent than others in the observation of times for the solemn performance of this duty. Some may be able to rise to higher and clearer apprehensions of them than others. But as for those, the bent of whose minds doth not lie towards thoughts of them, whose hearts are not on all occasions retreating unto the remembrance of them, who embrace not all opportunities to call them over as they are able; on what grounds can they be esteemed Christians? How do they live by the faith of the Son of God? Are the great things of the gospel, of the mediation of Christ, proposed unto us, as those which we may think of when we have nothing else to do, that we may meditate upon, or neglect at our pleasure, as those wherein our concernment is so small as that they must give place unto all other occasions or diversions whatever? Nay; if our minds are not filled with these things; if Christ doth not dwell plentifully in our hearts by faith; if our souls are not possessed with them, and in their whole inward frame and constitution so cast into this mould, as to be led by a natural complacency unto a converse with them, we are strangers unto the life of faith. And if we are thus conversant about these things, they will engage our hearts into the love of the person of Christ. To suppose the contrary, is indeed to deny the truth and reality of them all, and to turn the gospel into a fable.

Take one instance from among the rest; namely, his death. Hath he the heart of a Christian, who doth not often meditate on the death of his Saviour, who doth not derive his life from it? Who can look into the gospel and not fix on those

lines which either immediately and directly, or through some other paths of divine grace and wisdom, do lead him thereunto? And can any have believing thoughts concerning the death of Christ, and not have his heart affected with ardent love unto his person? Christ in the gospel 'is evidently set forth, crucified before us.' Can any by the eye of faith look on this bleeding dying Redeemer, and suppose love unto his person to be nothing but the work of fancy or imagination? They know the contrary, who 'always bear about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus;' as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 10. As his whole name, in all that he did, is an ointment poured forth, for which 'the virgins love him,' Cant. i. 3. so this precious perfume of his death, is that where with their hearts are ravished in a peculiar manner.

Again, As there can be no faith in Christ, where there is no love unto him, on the account of his mediatory acts; so, where it is not, the want of it casteth persons under the highest guilt of ingratitude that our nature is liable unto. The highest aggravation of the sin of angels, was their ingratitude unto their Maker. For whereas, by his mere will and pleasure, they were stated in the highest excellency, preeminence, and dignity, that he thought good to communicate unto any creatures; or it may be, that any mere created nature is capable of in itself; they were unthankful for what they had so received from undeserved goodness and bounty, and so cast themselves into everlasting ruin. But yet the sins of men in their ingratitude towards Christ on the account of what he hath done for them, is attended with an aggravation above that of the angels. For although the angels were originally instated in that condition of dignity which in this world we cannot attain unto, yet were they not redeemed and recovered from misery as we are.

In all the crowd of evil and wicked men, that the world is pestered withal, there are none by common consent so stigmatized for unworthy villany, as those who are signally ungrateful for singular benefits. If persons are unthankful unto them, if they have not the highest love for them, who redeem them from ignominy and death, and instate them in a plentiful inheritance (if any such instances may be given), and that with the greatest expense of labour and charge;

mankind without any regret, doth tacitly condemn them unto greater miseries than those which they were delivered from. What then will be the condition of them, whose hearts are not so affected with the mediation of Christ, and the fruits of it, as to engage the best, the choicest of their affections unto him? The gospel itself will be a savour of death unto such ungrateful wretches.

2. That which the Scripture principally insisteth on as the motives of our love unto Christ, is his love unto us, which was the principle of all his mediatory actings in our behalf.

Love is that jewel of human nature which commands a valuation wherever it is found. Let other circumstances be what they will, whatever distances between persons may be made by them, yet real love where it is evidenced so to be, is not despised by any but such as degenerate into profligate brutality. If it be so stated as that it can produce no outward effects advantageous unto them that are beloved, yet it commands a respect as it were whether we will or no, and some return in its own kind. Especially it doth so if it be altogether undeserved, and so evidenceth itself to proceed from a goodness of nature, and an inclination unto the good of them on whom it is fixed. For whereas the essential nature of love consisteth in willing good unto them that are beloved; where the act of the will is real, sincere, and constantly exercised, without any defect of it on our part; no restraints can possibly be put upon our minds from going out in some acts of love again upon its account, unless all their faculties are utterly depraved, by habits of brutish and filthy lusts. But when this love which is thus undeserved, doth also abound in effects troublesome and chargeable in them in whom it is, and highly beneficial unto them on whom it is placed, if there be any such affection left in the nature of any man, it will prevail unto a reciprocal love. And all these things are found in the love of Christ unto that degree and height, as nothing parallel unto it can be found in the whole creation. I shall briefly speak of it under two general heads.

(1.) The sole spring of all the mediatory actings of Christ, both in the susception of our nature, and in all that he did and suffered therein, was his own mere love and grace, work-

ing by pity and compassion. It is true, he undertook this work principally with respect unto the glory of God, and out of love unto him. But with respect unto us, his only motive unto it was his abundant overflowing love. And this is especially remembered unto us in that instance wherein it carried him through the greatest difficulties, namely, in his death and the oblation of himself on our behalf; Gal. ii. 20. Eph. v. 2. 25, 26. 1 John iii. 16. Rev. i. 5, 6. This alone inclined the Son of God to undertake the glorious work of our redemption, and which carried him through the death and dread which he underwent in the accomplishment of it.

Should I engage into the consideration of this love of Christ, which was the great means of the conveying all the effects of divine wisdom and grace unto the church; that glass which God chose to represent himself and all his goodness in unto believers; that spirit of life in the wheel of all the motions of the person of Christ in the redemption of the church unto the eternal glory of God, his own and that of his redeemed also; that mirror wherein the holy angels and blessed saints, shall for ever contemplate the divine excellencies in their suitable operations; I must now begin a discourse much larger than that which I have passed through. But it is not suited unto my present design so to do. Nor considering the growing apprehensions of many about the person of Christ, which are utterly destructive of the whole nature of that love which we ascribe unto him, do I know how soon a more distinct explication and defence of it may be called for. And this cause will not be forsaken.

They know nothing of the life and power of the gospel, nothing of the reality of the grace of God, nor do they believe aright one article of the Christian faith, whose hearts are not sensible of the love of Christ herein. Nor is he sensible of the love of Christ, whose affections are not thereon drawn out unto him. I say, they make a pageant of religion, a fable for the theatre of the world, a business of fancy and opinion, whose hearts are not really affected with the love of Christ, in the susception and discharge of the work of mediation, so as to have real and spiritually sensible affections for him. Men may babble things which they have learnt by rote; they have no real acquaintance with

Christianity, who imagine that the placing of the most intense affections of our souls on the person of Christ, the loving him with all our hearts because of his love, our being overcome thereby, until we are sick of love, the constant motions of our souls towards him with delight and adherence, are but fancies and imaginations. I renounce that religion, be it whose it will, that teacheth, insinuateth, or giveth countenance unto such abominations. That doctrine is as discrepant from the gospel as the Alcoran, as contrary to the experience of believers as what is acted in and by the devils, which instructs men unto a contempt of the most fervent love unto Christ, or casts reflections upon it. I had rather choose my eternal lot and portion with the meanest believer, who being effectually sensible of the love of Christ, spends his days in mourning that he can love him no more than he finds himself on his utmost endeavours for the discharge of his duty to do, than with the best of them, whose vain speculations, and a false pretence of reason, puff them up unto a contempt of these things.

(2.) This love of Christ unto the church, is singular in all those qualifications which render love obliging unto reciprocal affections. It is so in its reality. There can be no love amongst men, but will derive something from that disorder which is in their affections, in their highest actings. But the love of Christ is pure and absolutely free from any alloy. There cannot be the least suspicion of any thing of self in it. And it is absolutely undeserved. Nothing can be found amongst men that can represent or exemplify its freedom from any desert on our part. The most candid and ingenuous love amongst us, is, when we love another for his worth, excellency, and usefulness, though we have no singular benefit of them ourselves. But not the least of any of these things were found in them on whom he set his love, until they were wrought in them, as effects of that love which he set upon them.

Men sometimes may rise up unto such a high degree and instance in love, as that they will even die for one another. But then it must be on a superlative esteem which they have of their worth and merit. It may be, saith the apostle, treating of the love of Christ, and of God in him, 'that for a good man one would even dare to die;' Rom. v. 7. It

must be for a good man, one who is justly esteemed 'commune bonum,' a public good to mankind; one whose benignity is ready to exercise loving-kindness on all occasions, which is the estate of a good man; peradventure some would even dare to die for such a man. This is the height of what love among men can arise unto; and if it hath been instanced in any, it hath been accompanied with an open mixture of vain-glory, and desire of renown. But the Lord Christ placed his love on us, that love from whence he died for us, when we were sinners and ungodly; that is, every thing which might render us unamiable and undeserving. Though we were as deformed as sin could render us, and more deeply indebted than the whole creation could pay or answer, yet did he fix his love upon us, to free us from that condition, and to render us meet for the most intimate society with himself. Never was there love which had such effects, which cost him so dear in whom it was, and proved so advantageous unto them on whom it was placed. In the pursuit of it he underwent every thing that is evil in his own person, and we receive every thing that is good in the favour of God, and eternal blessedness.

On the account of these things, the apostle ascribeth a constraining power unto the love of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 14. And if it constraineth us unto any return unto him, it doth so unto that of love in the first place. For no suitable return can be made for love but love, at least not without it. As love cannot be purchased, 'for if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned,' Cant. viii. 7. so if a man would give all the world for a requital of love, without love, it would be despised. To fancy that all the love of Christ unto us, consists in the precepts and promises of the gospel, and all our love unto him, in the observance of his commands, without a real love in him unto our persons like that of a 'husband unto a wife,' Eph. v. 25, 26. or a holy affection in our hearts and minds unto his person, is to overthrow the whole power of religion, to despoil it of its life and soul, leaving nothing but the carcase of it.

This love unto Christ, and unto God in him, because of his love unto us, is the principal instance of divine love, the touchstone of its reality and sincerity. Whatever men may

boast of their affectionate endearments unto the divine goodness, if it be not founded in a sense of this love of Christ and the love of God in him, they are but empty notions they flourish withal, and their deceived hearts feed upon ashes. It is in Christ alone that God is declared to be love, without an apprehension whereof, none can love him as they ought. In him alone, that infinite goodness which is the peculiar object of divine love, is truly represented unto us, without any such deceiving phantasms, as the workings of fancy, or depravation of reason may impose upon us. And on him doth the saving communication of all the effects of it depend. And an infinite condescension is it in the Holy God, so to express his 'glory in the face of Jesus Christ,' or to propose himself as the object of our love in and through him. For considering our weakness, as to an immediate comprehension of the infinite excellencies of the divine nature, or to bear the rays of his resplendent glory, seeing none can see his face and live, it is the most adorable effect of divine wisdom and grace, that we are admitted unto the contemplation of them, in the person of Jesus Christ.

There is yet farther evidence to be given unto this love unto the person of Christ, from all those blessed effects of it which are declared in the Scripture, and whereof believers have the experience in themselves. But something I have spoken concerning them formerly in my discourse about communion with God; and the nature of the present design, will not admit of enlargement upon them.

CHAP. XV.

Conformity unto Christ, and following his example.

The third thing proposed to declare the use of the person of Christ in religion, is that conformity which is required of us unto him. This is the great design and projection of all believers. Every one of them hath the idea or image of Christ in his mind; in the eye of faith, as it is represented unto him in the glass of the gospel. Κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν δόξαν κυρίου, 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'We behold his glory in a

glass,' which implants the image of it on our minds. And hereby the mind is transformed into the same image, made like unto Christ so represented unto us, which is the conformity we speak of. Hence every true believer hath his heart under the conduct of an habitual inclination and desire to be like unto Christ. And it were easy to demonstrate that where this is not, there is neither faith nor love. Faith will cast the soul into the form or frame of the thing believed; Rom. vi. 17. And all sincere love worketh an assimilation. Wherefore the best evidence of a real principle of the life of God in any soul, of the sincerity of faith, love, and obedience, is an internal cordial endeavour, operative on all occasions, after conformity unto Jesus Christ.

There are two parts of the duty proposed. The first respects the internal grace and holiness of the human nature of Christ; the other his example in duties of obedience. And both of them, both materially, as to the things wherein they consist, and formally, as they were his, or in him, belong unto the constitution of a true disciple.

1. Internal conformity unto his habitual grace and holiness, is the fundamental design of a Christian life. That which is the best without it, is a pretended imitation of his example in outward duties of obedience. I call it pretended, because where the first design is wanting, it is no more but so; nor is it acceptable to Christ, nor approved by him. And therefore an attempt unto that end hath often issued in formality, hypocrisy, and superstition. I shall therefore lay down the grounds of this design, the nature of it, and the means of its pursuit.

God, in the human nature of Christ did perfectly renew that blessed image of his on our nature, which we lost in Adam, with an addition of many glorious endowments which Adam was not made partaker of. God did not renew it in his nature, as though that portion of it whereof he was partaker, had ever been destitute or deprived of it, as it is with the same nature in all other persons. For he derived not his nature from Adam in the same way that we do; nor was he ever in Adam as the public representative of our nature as we were. But our nature in him had the image of God implanted in it, which was lost and separated from the same nature, in all other instances of its subsistence. It pleased

the Father that in him all fulness should dwell, that he should be full of grace and truth, and in all things have the pre-eminence. But of these gracious endowments of the human nature of Christ, I have discoursed elsewhere.

2. One end of God in filling the human nature of Christ with all grace, in implanting his glorious image upon it, was, that he might in him propose an example of what he would by the same grace renew us unto, and what we ought in a way of duty to labour after. The fulness of grace was necessary unto the human nature of Christ, from its hypostatical union with the Son of God. For whereas therein the 'fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily,' it became τὸ ἅγιον, a 'holy thing;' Luke i. 35. It was also necessary unto him, as unto his own obedience in the flesh, wherein he fulfilled all righteousness, did no sin, 'neither was guile found in his mouth;' 1 Pet ii. 22. And it was so unto the discharge of the office he undertook: for 'such an high-priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;' Heb. vii. 26. Howbeit the infinite wisdom of God had this farther design in it also, namely, that he might be the pattern and example of the renovation of the image of God in us, and of the glory that doth ensue thereon. He is in the eye of God as the idea of what he intends in us, in the communication of grace and glory; and he ought to be so in ours as unto all that we aim at in a way of duty.

He hath 'predestinated us to be conformed unto the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren;' Rom. viii. 30. In the collation of all grace on Christ, God designed to make 'him the first-born of many brethren;' that is, not only to give him the power and authority of the first-born, with the trust of the whole inheritance to be communicated unto them, but also as the example of what he would bring them unto. 'For both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren;' Heb. ii. 11. It is Christ who sanctifieth believers; yet is it from God, who first sanctified him, that he and they might be of one, and so become brethren, as bearing the image of the same Father. God designed and gave unto Christ grace and glory; and he did it that he might be the prototype of

what he designed unto us, and would bestow upon us. Hence the apostle shews that the effect of this predestination to conformity unto the image of the Son, is the communication of all effectual saving grace, with the glory that ensues thereon. Ver. 30. 'Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.'

The great design of God in his grace is, that as we have borne the 'image of the first Adam,' in the depravation of our natures, so we should bear the 'image of the second' in their renovation. As we have borne 'the image of the earthy,' so we shall bear 'the image of the heavenly;' 1 Cor. xv. 49. And as he is the pattern of all our graces, so he is of glory also. All our glory will consist in our being 'made like unto him,' which what it is doth not as yet appear; 1 John iii. 2. For 'he shall change even our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;' Phil. iii. 21. Wherefore the fulness of grace was bestowed on the human nature of Christ, and the image of God gloriously implanted thereon, that it might be the prototype and example of what the church was through him to be made partaker of. That which God intends for us in the internal communication of his grace, and in the use of all the ordinances of the church, is, that we may come unto the 'measure of the stature of the fulness which is in Christ;' Ephes. iv. 13. There is a fulness of all grace in Christ. Hereunto are we to be brought according to the measure that is designed unto every one of us. 'For unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ;' ver. 7. He hath in his sovereign grace assigned different measures unto those on whom he doth bestow it. And therefore it is called the stature, because as we grow gradually unto it, as men do unto their just stature; so there is a variety in what we attain unto, as there is in the statures of men, who are yet all perfect in their proportion.

3. This image of God in Christ is represented unto us in the gospel. Being lost from our nature, it was utterly impossible we should have any just comprehension of it. There could be no steady notion of the image of God, until it was renewed and exemplified in the human nature of

Christ. And thereon, without the knowledge of him, the wisest of men have taken those things to render men most like unto God which were adverse unto him. Such were the most of those things which the heathens adored as heroic virtues. But being perfectly exemplified in Christ, it is now plainly represented unto us in the gospel. Therein 'with open face we behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image;' 2 Cor. iii. 18. The veil being taken away from divine revelations by the doctrine of the gospel, and from our hearts 'by the Lord the Spirit,' we behold the image of God in Christ with open face, which is the principal means of our being transformed into it. The gospel is the declaration of Christ unto us, and the glory of God in him, as unto many other ends, so in especial, that we might in him behold and contemplate that image of God we are gradually to be renewed into. Hence we are so therein to 'learn the truth as it is in Jesus, as to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and to put on that new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Ephes. iv. 20. 23, 24. that is, 'renewed after the image of him who created him;' Col. iii. 10.

4. It is therefore evident, that the life of God in us consists in conformity unto Christ; nor is the Holy Spirit as the principal and efficient cause of it given unto us for any other end, but to unite us unto him, and make us like him. Wherefore the original gospel duty which animates and rectifies all others, is a design for conformity unto Christ in all the gracious principles and qualifications of his holy soul, wherein the image of God in him doth consist. As he is the prototype and exemplar in the eye of God for the communication of all grace unto us; so he ought to be the great example in the eye of our faith in all our obedience unto God, in our compliance with all that he requireth of us.

God himself, or the divine nature in its holy perfections, is the ultimate object and idea of our transformation in the renewing of our minds. And therefore under the Old Testament, before the incarnation of the Son, he proposed his own holiness immediately as the pattern of the church. 'Be ye holy, for the Lord your God is holy;' Lev. xi. 44. xix. 2. xx. 5. But the law made nothing perfect. For to

complete this great injunction, there was yet wanting an express example of the holiness required, which is not given us but in him, who is the 'first-born, the image of the invisible God.'

There was a notion even among the philosophers, that the principal endeavour of a wise man was to be like unto God. But in the improvement of it the best of them fell into foolish and proud imaginations. Howbeit the notion itself was the principal beam of our primogenial light, the best relic of our natural perfections. And those who are not some way under the power of a design to be like unto God, are every way like unto the devil. But those persons who had nothing but the absolute essential properties of the divine nature to contemplate on in the light of reason, failed all of them both in the notion itself of conformity unto God, and especially in the practical improvement of it. Whatever men may fancy to the contrary, it is the design of the apostle in sundry places of his writings to prove that they did so, especially Rom. i. 1 Cor. i. Wherefore it was an infinite condescension of divine wisdom and grace gloriously to implant that image of his which we are to endeavour conformity unto, on the human nature of Christ, and then so fully to represent and propose it unto us in the revelation of the gospel.

The infinite perfections of God considered absolutely in themselves, are accompanied with such an incomprehensible glory, as is hard to conceive how they are the object of our imitation. But the representation that is made of them in Christ, as the image of the invisible God is so suited to the renewed faculties of our souls, so congenial unto the new creature, or the gracious principle of spiritual life in us, that the mind can dwell on the contemplation of them, and be thereby transformed into the same image.

Herein lies much of the life and power of Christian religion, as it resides in the souls of men. This is the prevailing design of the minds of them that truly believe the gospel; they would in all things be like unto Jesus Christ. And I shall briefly shew, (1.) What is required hereunto: and, (2.) What is to be done in a way of duty for the attaining that end.

[1.] A spiritual light to discern the beauty, glory, and

amiableness of grace in Christ, is required hereunto. We can have no real design of conformity unto him, unless we have their eyes, who 'saw his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;' John i. 14. Nor is it enough that we seem to discern the glory of his person, unless we see a beauty and excellency in every grace that is in him. 'Learn of me,' saith he, 'for I am meek and lowly in heart;' Matt. xi. 29. If we are not able to discern an excellency in meekness and lowliness of heart (as they are things generally despised), how shall we sincerely endeavour after conformity unto Christ in them? The like may be said of all other his gracious qualifications. His zeal, his patience, his self-denial, his readiness for the cross, his love unto his enemies, his benignity to all mankind, his faith and fervency in prayer, his love to God, his compassion towards the souls of men, his unweariedness in doing good, his purity, his universal holiness; unless we have a spiritual light to discern the glory and amiableness of them all as they were in him, we speak in vain of any design for conformity unto him. And this we have not, unless God shine into our hearts to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. It is, I say, a foolish thing to talk of the imitation of Christ, whilst really through the darkness of our minds we discern not that there is an excellency in the things wherein we ought to be like unto him.

[2.] Love unto them so discovered in a beam of heavenly light, is required unto the same end. No soul can have a design of conformity unto Christ, but his, who so likes and loves the graces that were in him, as to esteem a participation of them in their power, to be the greatest advantage, to be the most invaluable privilege that can in this world be attained. It is the savour of his good ointments for which the virgins love him, cleave unto him, and endeavour to be like him. In that whereof we now discourse, namely, of conformity unto him, he is the representative of the image of God unto us. As if we do not love and prize above all things those gracious qualifications and dispositions of mind wherein it doth consist, whatever we may pretend of the imitation of Christ in any outward acts or duties of obedience, we have no design of conformity unto him. He

who sees and admires the glory of Christ as filled with these graces, as he 'was fairer than the children of men,' because 'grace was poured into his lips,' unto whom nothing is so desirable, as to have the same mind, the same heart, the same spirit that was in Christ Jesus, he is prepared to press after conformity unto him. And unto such a soul the representation of all these excellencies in the person of Christ, is the great incentive, motive, and guide, in and unto all internal obedience unto God.

Lastly, That wherein we are to labour for this conformity may be reduced unto two heads.

[1.] An opposition unto all sin, in the root, principle, and most secret springs of it, or original cleavings unto our nature. 'He did no sin, neither was there any guile found in his mouth.' 'He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.' He was the 'Lamb of God without spot or blemish;' like unto us, yet without sin. Not the least tincture of sin did ever make an approach unto his holy nature. He was absolutely free from every drop of that *fomes*, which hath invaded us in our depraved condition. Wherefore to be freed from all sin, is the first general part of an endeavour for conformity unto Christ. And although we cannot perfectly attain hereunto in this life, as we have 'not already attained, nor are already perfect,' yet he who groaneth not in himself after it, who doth not loath every thing that is of the remainder of sin in him, and himself for it, who doth not labour after its absolute and universal extirpation, hath no sincere design of conformity unto Christ, nor can so have. He who endeavours to be like him, must 'purify himself, even as he is pure.' Thoughts of the purity of Christ, in his absolute freedom from the least tincture of sin, will not suffer a believer to be negligent at any time, for the endeavouring the utter ruin of that which makes him unlike unto him. And it is a blessed advantage unto faith in the work of mortification of sin, that we have such a pattern continually before us.

[2.] The due improvement of, and continual growth in every grace, is the other general part of this duty. In the exercise of his own all-fulness of grace, both in moral duties of obedience, and the especial duties of his office, did the glory of Christ on the earth consist. Wherefore to abound

in the exercise of every grace, to grow in the root, and thrive in the fruit of them, is to be conformed unto the image of the Son of God.

2. The following the example of Christ in all duties towards God and men, in his whole conversation on the earth, is the second part of the instance now given concerning the use of the person of Christ in religion. The field is large which here lies before us, and filled with numberless blessed instances. I cannot here enter into it; and the mistakes that have been in a pretence unto it, requires that it should be handled distinctly and at large by itself, which, if God will, may be done in due time. One or two general instances wherein he was most eminently our example, shall close this discourse.

(1.) His meekness, lowliness of mind, condescension unto all sorts of persons; his love and kindness unto mankind, his readiness to do good unto all, with patience and forbearance, are continually set before us in his example. I place them all under one head, as proceeding all from the same spring of divine goodness, and having effects of the same nature. With respect unto them, it is required that 'the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus,' Phil. ii. 5. and that we 'walk in love, as he also loved us;' Eph. v. 2.

In these things was he the great representative of the divine goodness unto us. In the acting of these graces on all occasions did he declare and manifest the nature of God from whom he came. And this was one end of his exhibition in the flesh. Sin had filled the world with a representation of the devil and his nature, in mutual hatred, strife, variance, envy, wrath, pride, fierceness, and rage, against one another, all which are of the old murderer. The instances of a cured, of a contrary frame were obscure and weak in the best of the saints of old. But in our Lord Jesus, the light of the glory of God herein first shone upon the world. In the exercise of these graces which he most abounded in, because the sins, weaknesses, and infirmities of men gave continual occasion thereunto, did he represent the divine nature, as love, as infinitely good, benign, merciful, and patient, as delighting in the exercise of these its holy properties. In them was the Lord Christ our example in

an especial manner. And they do in vain pretend to be his disciples, to be followers of him, who endeavour not to order the whole course of their lives in conformity unto him in these things.

One Christian who is meek, humble, kind, patient, and useful unto all, that condescends to the ignorance, weaknesses, and infirmities of others, that passeth by provocations, injuries, contempt, with patience, and with silence, unless where the glory and truth of God call for a just vindication; that pitieth all sorts of men in their failings and miscarriages, who is free from jealousies and evil surmises, that loveth what is good in all men, and all men even wherein they are not good, nor do good, doth more express the virtues and excellencies of Christ, than thousands can do with the most magnificent works of piety or charity, where this frame is wanting in them. For men to pretend to follow the example of Christ, and in the mean time to be proud, wrathful, envious, bitterly zealous, calling for fire from heaven to destroy men, or fetching it themselves from hell, is to cry, 'Hail unto him,' and to crucify him afresh unto their power.

(2.) Self-denial, readiness for the cross, with patience in sufferings, are the second sort of things which he calls all his disciples to follow his example in. It is the fundamental law of his gospel, that if any one will be his disciple, 'he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow him.' These things in him, as they are all of them summarily represented, Phil. ii. 5—8. by reason of the glory of his person, and the nature of his sufferings, are quite of another kind than that we are called unto. But his grace in them all is our only pattern, in what is required of us. 'Christ hath suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not;' 1 Pet. ii. 21—23. Hence are we called to look unto 'Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame.' For we are to 'consider him, who endured such contradiction of sinners in himself, that we faint not;' Heb. xii. 2, 3. Blessed be God for this example; for the glory of the condescension, patience, faith, and endurance of Jesus Christ in the extre-

mity of all sorts of sufferings. This hath been the pole-star of the church in all its storms; the guide, the comfort, supportment and encouragement of all those holy souls, who in their several generations, have in various degrees undergone persecution for righteousness' sake, and yet continueth so to be unto them who are in the same condition.

And I must say, as I have done on some other occasions in the handling of this subject, that a discourse on this one instance of the use of Christ in religion, from the consideration of the person who suffered, and set us this example; of the principle from whence, and the end for which, he did it; of the variety of evils of all sorts he had to conflict withal; of his invincible patience under them all, and immoveableness of love and compassion unto mankind, even his persecutors; the dolorous afflictive circumstances of his sufferings from God and men; the blessed efficacious workings of his faith and trust in God unto the uttermost; with the glorious issue of the whole, and the influence of all these considerations unto the consolation and supportment of the church, would take up more room and time than what is allotted unto the whole of that, whereof it is here the least part. I shall leave the whole under the shade of that blessed promise, 'If so be that we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together; for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;' Rom. viii. 17, 18.

The last thing proposed concerning the person of Christ, was the use of it unto believers, in the whole of their relation unto God, and duty towards him. And the things belonging thereunto, may be reduced unto these general heads:

(1.) Their sanctification, which consisteth in these four things: [1.] The mortification of sin. [2.] The gradual renovation of our natures. [3.] Assistances in actual obedience. [4.] The same in temptations and trials.

(2.) Their justification, with its concomitants and consequents; as, [1.] Adoption. [2.] Peace. [3.] Consolation and joy in life and death. [4.] Spiritual gifts unto the edification of themselves and others. [5.] A blessed resurrection. [6.] Eternal glory.

There are other things which also belong hereunto: as their guidance in the course of their conversation in this

world; direction unto usefulness in all states and conditions; patient waiting for the accomplishment of God's promises to the church; the communication of federal blessings unto their families; and the exercise of loving-kindness towards mankind in general; with sundry other concernments of the life of faith of the like importance; but they may be all reduced unto the general heads proposed.

What should have been spoken with reference unto these things, belongs unto these three heads:

1st. A declaration that all these things are wrought in, and communicated unto believers, according to their various natures, by an emanation of grace and power from the person of Jesus Christ, as the head of the church, as he who is exalted and made a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

2dly. A declaration of the way and manner how believers do live upon Christ in the exercise of faith, whereby, according to the promise and appointment of God, they derive from him the whole grace and mercy whereof in this world they are made partakers, and are established in the expectation of what they shall receive hereafter by his power. And that two things do hence ensue: (1st.) The necessity of universal evangelical obedience, seeing it is only in and by the duties of it, that faith is, or can be, kept in a due exercise unto the ends mentioned. (2dly.) That believers do hereby increase continually with the increase of God, and grow up into him who is the head, until they become the fulness of him who filleth all in all.

3dly. A conviction that a real interest in, and participation of, these things, cannot be obtained any other way, but by the actual exercise of faith on the person of Jesus Christ.

These things were necessary to be handled at large with reference unto the end proposed. But for sundry reasons, the whole of this labour is here declined. For some of the particulars mentioned, I have already insisted on in other discourses heretofore published, and that with respect unto the end here designed. And this argument cannot be handled as it doth deserve, unto full satisfaction, without an entire discourse concerning the life of faith, which my present design will not admit of.

CHAP. XVI.

An humble inquiry into, and prospect of, the infinite wisdom of God, in the constitution of the person of Christ, and the way of salvation thereby.

FROM the consideration of the things before insisted on, we may endeavour, according unto our measure, to take a view of, and humbly adore, the infinite wisdom of God, in the holy contrivance of this great 'mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.' As it is a spiritual evangelical mystery, it is an effect of divine wisdom, in the redemption and salvation of the church, unto the eternal glory of God. And as it is a 'great mystery,' so it is the mystery of the 'manifold wisdom of God,' Eph. iii. 9, 10. that is, of infinite wisdom working in great variety of actings and operations, suited unto, and expressive of, its own infinite fulness: for herein were 'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' laid up, and laid out; Col. ii. 3. An argument this is, in some parts whereof divers of the ancient writers of the church have laboured, some occasionally, and some with express design. I shall insist only on those things which Scripture light leads us directly unto. The depths of divine wisdom in this glorious work, are hid from the eyes of all living. 'God alone understandeth the way thereof; and he knoweth the place thereof;' as he speaks, Job xxviii. 21. 23. Yet is it so glorious in its effects, that 'destruction and death say, We have heard the fame of it with our ears;' ver. 22. The fame and report of this divine wisdom reach even unto hell. Those who eternally perish, shall hear a fame of this wisdom in the glorious effects of it, towards the blessed souls above, though some of them would not believe it here in the light of the gospel, and none of them can understand it there, in their everlasting darkness. Hence the report which they have of this wisdom is an aggravation of their misery.

These depths we may admire and adore, but we cannot comprehend: 'For who hath known the mind of the Lord herein, or with whom took he counsel?' Concerning the original causes of his counsels in this great mystery, we can only say, 'O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments,

and his ways past finding out.' This alone is left unto us in the way of duty, that in the effects of them, we should contemplate on their excellency, so as to give glory to God, and live in a holy admiration of his wisdom and grace. For to give glory unto him, and admire him is our present duty, until he 'shall come eternally to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;' 2 Thess. i. 10.

We can do no more but stand at the shore of this ocean, and adore its unsearchable depths. What is delivered from them by divine revelation we may receive as pearls of price, to enrich and adorn our souls. 'For secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed, unto us, that we may do the words of his law;' Deut. xxix. 29. We shall not therefore in our inquiry into this great mystery, intrude ourselves into the things which we have not seen, but only endeavour a right understanding of what is revealed concerning it. For the end of all divine revelations is our knowledge of the things revealed, with our obedience thereon; and unto this end, things revealed do belong unto us.

Some things in general are to be premised unto our present inquiry.

1. We can have no view or due prospect of the wisdom of God in any of his works, much less in this of 'sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,' or the constitution of his person, and the work of redemption to be accomplished thereby, unless we consider also the interest of the other holy properties of the divine nature in them. Such are his holiness, his righteousness, his sovereign authority, his goodness, love, and grace.

There are three excellencies of the divine nature principally to be considered in all the external works of God. (1.) His goodness, which is the communicative property thereof. This is the eternal fountain and spring of all divine communications. Whatever is good in and unto any creature, is an emanation from divine goodness. 'He is good, and he doth good.' That which acts originally in the divine nature, unto the communication of itself in any blessed or gracious effects unto the creatures, is goodness.

(2.) Wisdom, which is the directive power or excellency of the divine nature. Hereby God guides, disposeth, orders,

and directs all things unto his own glory, in and by their own immediate proper ends; Prov. xvi. 4. Rev. iv. 11.

(3.) Power, which is the effective excellency of the divine nature, effecting and accomplishing what wisdom doth design and order.

Whereas wisdom therefore is that holy excellency or power of the Divine Being, wherein God designs, and whereby he effects the glory of all the other properties of his nature, we cannot trace the paths of it in any work of God, unless we know the interest and concernment of those other properties in that work. For that which wisdom principally designs, is the glorification of them. And unto this end the effective property of the divine nature, which is almighty power, always accompanies, or is subservient unto, the directive or infinite wisdom, which is requisite unto perfection in operation. What infinite goodness will communicate *ad extra*, what it will open the eternal fountain of the Divine Being and all-sufficiency to give forth; that infinite wisdom designs, contrives, and directs to the glory of God; and what wisdom so designs, infinite power effects. See Isa. xl. 13—15. 17. 28.

2. We can have no apprehensions of the interest of the other properties of the divine nature in this great mystery of godliness, whose glory was designed in infinite wisdom, without the consideration of that state and condition of our own wherein they are so concerned. That which was designed unto the eternal glory of God in this great work of the incarnation of his Son, was the redemption of mankind, or the recovery and salvation of the church. What hath been disputed by some concerning it, without respect unto the sin of man, and the salvation of the church, is curiosity, and indeed presumptuous folly. The whole Scripture constantly assigneth this sole end of that effect of divine goodness and wisdom, yea, asserts it as the only foundation of the gospel; John iii. 16. Wherefore unto a due contemplation of divine wisdom in it, it is necessary we should consider what is the nature of sin, especially of that first sin, wherein our original apostacy from God did consist; what was the condition of mankind thereon; what is the concernment of the holy God therein, on the account of the blessed properties of his nature; what way was suited unto

our recovery, that God might be glorified in them all. Without a previous consideration of these things, we can have no due conceptions of the wisdom of God in this glorious work, which we inquire after. Wherefore I shall so far speak of them, that if it be the will of God, the minds of those who read and consider them, may be opened and prepared to give admittance unto some rays of that divine wisdom in this glorious work, the lustre of whose full light we are not able in this world to behold.

When there was a visible pledge of the presence of God in the 'bush that burned' and was not consumed, Moses said, he 'would turn aside to see that great sight;' Exod. iii. 3. And this great representation of the glory of God being made and proposed unto us, it is certainly our duty to divert from all other occasions unto the contemplation of it. But as Moses was then commanded to 'put off his shoes, the place whereon he stood being holy ground;' so it will be the wisdom of him that writes, and of them that read, to divest themselves of all carnal affections and imaginations, that they may draw nigh unto this great object of faith, with due reverence and fear.

The first thing we are to consider in order unto the end proposed is, the nature of our sin and apostacy from God. For from thence we must learn the concernment of the divine excellencies of God in this work. And there are three things that were eminent therein.

(1.) A reflection on the honour of the holiness and wisdom of God, in the rejection of his image. He had newly 'made man in his own image.' And this work he so expresseth as to intimate a peculiar effect of divine wisdom in it, whereby it was distinguished from all other external works of creation whatever. Gen. i. 26, 27. 'And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.' No where is there such an emphasis of expression concerning any work of God. And sundry things are represented as peculiar therein.

[1st.] That the word of consultation and that of execution are distinct. In all other works of creation, the word of determination and execution, was the same. When he created light which seems to be the beauty and glory of the

whole creation, he only said, 'Let there be light, and there was light;' Gen. i. 3. So was it with all other things. But when he comes unto the creation of man, another process is proposed unto our faith. These several words are distinct, not in time, but in nature. 'God said, Let us make man in our image and likeness;' and thereon it is added distinctly, as the execution of that antecedent counsel; 'so God made man in his own image.' This puts a signal eminency on this work of God.

[2dly.] A distinct peculiar concernment of all the persons of the holy Trinity, in their consultation and operation, is in like manner proposed unto us. 'And God said, Let us make man.' The truth hereof I have sufficiently evinced elsewhere, and discovered the vanity of all other glosses and expositions. The properties of the divine nature principally and originally considerable in all external operations (as we have newly observed) are goodness, wisdom, and power. In this great work divine goodness exerted itself eminently and effectually in the person of the Father; the eternal fountain and spring, as of the divine nature, so of all divine operations. Divine wisdom acted itself peculiarly in the person of the Son, this being the principle notion thereof, the eternal wisdom of the Father. Divine power wrought effectually in the person of the Holy Spirit; who is the immediate actor of all divine operations.

[3dly.] The proposition of the effecting this work being by way of consultation, represents it a signal effect of infinite wisdom. These expressions are used to lead us unto the contemplation of that wisdom.

Thus 'God made man in his own image,' that is, in such a rectitude of nature as represented his righteousness and holiness, in such a state and condition as had a reflection on it of his power and rule. The former was the substance of it, the latter a necessary consequent thereof. This representation, I say, of God, in power and rule, was not that image of God wherein man was created, but a consequent of it. So the words and their order declare. 'Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,' &c. Because he was made in the image of God, this dominion and rule were granted unto him. So fond is their imagination who would

have the image of God to consist solely in these things. Wherefore the loss of the image of God was not originally the loss of power and dominion, or a right thereunto. But man was deprived of that right, on the loss of that image which it was granted unto. Wherein it did consist, see Eccles. vii. 29. Eph. iv. 24.

Three things God designed in this communication of his image unto our nature, which were his principal ends in the creation of all things here below. And therefore was divine wisdom more eminently exerted therein, than in all the other works of this inferior creation.

1. The first was, that he might therein make a representation of his holiness and righteousness among his creatures. This was not done in any other of them. Characters they had on them of his goodness, wisdom, and power. In these things the 'heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.' His eternal power and Godhead are manifest in the things that are made. But none of them, not the whole fabric of heaven and earth, with all their glorious ornaments and endowments, were either fit or able to receive any impressions of his holiness and righteousness, of any of the moral perfections, or universal rectitude of his nature. Yet in the demonstration and representation of these things doth the glory of God principally consist. Without them he could not be known and glorified as God. Wherefore he would have an image and representation of them in the creation here below. And this he will always have so long as he will be worshipped by any of his creatures. And therefore, when it was lost in Adam it was renewed in Christ, as hath been declared.

2. The second was, that it might be a means of rendering actual glory unto him, from all other parts of the creation. Without this, which is as the animating life and form of the whole, the other creatures are but as a dead thing. They could not any way declare the glory of God, but passively and objectively. They were as an harmonious well-tuned instrument, which gives no sound unless there be a skilful hand to move and act it. What is light if there be no eye to see it? or what is music if there be no ear to hear it? How glorious and beautiful soever any of the works of creation appear to be, from impressions of divine power,

wisdom, and goodness on them, yet, without this image of God in man, there was nothing here below to understand God in them, to glorify God by them. This alone is that whereby in a way of admiration, obedience, and praise, we were enabled to render unto God all the glory which he designed from those works of his power.

3. The third was, that it might be a means to bring man unto that eternal enjoyment of himself, which he was fitted for and designed unto. For this was to be done in a way of obedience; 'do this and live,' was that rule of it which the nature of God and man, with their mutual relation unto one another, did require. But we were made meet for this obedience, and enabled unto it, only by virtue of this image of God implanted in our natures. It was morally a power to live unto God in obedience, that we might come to the enjoyment of him in glory.

Evident it is, that these were the principal ends of God in the creation of all things. Wherefore this constitution of our nature, and the furnishment of it with the image of God, was the most eminent effect of infinite wisdom in all the outward works of the divine nature.

(2.) In the entrance of sin, and by apostacy from God, man voluntarily rejected and defaced this blessed representation of the righteousness and holiness of God, this great effect of his goodness and wisdom, in its tendency unto his eternal glory, and our enjoyment of him. No greater dishonour could be done unto him, no endeavour could have been more pernicious in casting contempt on his counsel. For as his holiness, which was represented in that image, was despoiled, so we did what lay in us to defeat the contrivance of his wisdom. This will be evident by reflecting on the ends of it now mentioned. For,

[1.] Hereon there remained nothing in all the creation here below, whereby any representation might be made of God's holiness and righteousness, or any of the moral perfections of his nature. How could it be done this image being lost out of the world? The brute inanimate part of the creation, however stupendously great in its matter, and glorious in its outward form, was no way capable of it. The nature of man under the loss of this image, fallen, depraved, polluted, and corrupted, gives rather a representation

and image of Satan, than of God. Hence instead of goodness, love, righteousness, holiness, peace, all virtues usefully communicative and effective of the good of the whole race of mankind, which would have been effects of this image of God, and representatives of his nature, the whole world from and by the nature of man, is filled with envy, malice, revenge, cruelty, oppression, and all engines of promoting self, whereunto man is wholly turned as fallen off from God. He that would learn the divine nature, from the representation that is made of it, in the present actings of the nature of man, will be gradually led unto the devil instead of God. Wherefore no greater indignity could be offered unto divine wisdom and holiness, than there was in this rejection of the image of God wherein we were created.

[2.] There was no way left whereby glory might redound unto God from the remainder of the creation here below. For the nature of man alone was designed to be the way and means of it, by virtue of the image of God implanted on it. Wherefore man by sin did not only draw off himself from that relation unto God wherein he was made, but drew off the whole creation here below with himself into a uselessness unto his glory. And upon the entrance of sin, before the cure of our apostacy was actually accomplished, the generality of mankind divided the creatures into two sorts; those above, or the heavenly bodies, and those here below. Those of the first sort they worshipped as their gods; and those of the other sort they abused unto their lusts. Wherefore God was every way dishonoured in and by them all, nor was there any glory given him on their account. What some attempted to do of that nature, in a wisdom of their own, ended in folly and a renewed dishonour of God, as the apostle declares, Rom. i. 18, 19. 21, 22.

[3.] Man hereby lost all power and ability of attaining that end for which he was made, namely, the eternal enjoyment of God. Upon the matter, and as much as in us lay, the whole end of God in the creation of all things here below was utterly defeated.

But that which was the malignity and poison of this sin, was the contempt that was cast on the holiness of God, whose representation, and all its express characters, were utterly despised and rejected therein. Herein then lay the

concernment of the holiness or righteousness of God in this sin of our nature, which we are inquiring after. Unless some reparation be made for the indignity cast upon it in the rejection of the image and representation of it, unless there be some way whereby it may be more eminently exalted in the nature of man, than it was debased and despised in the same nature; it was just, equal, righteous with God, that which becomes the rectitude and purity of his nature, that mankind should perish eternally in that condition whereinto it was cast by sin.

It was not, therefore, consistent with the glory of God, that mankind should be restored, that this nature of ours should be brought unto the enjoyment of him, unless his holiness be more exalted, be more conspicuously represented in the same nature, than ever it was depressed or despised thereby. The demonstration of its glory in any other nature, as in that of angels, would not serve unto this end, as we shall see afterward.

We must now a little return unto what we before laid down. Wisdom being the directive power of all divine operations, and the end of all those operations being the glory of God himself, or the demonstration of the excellencies of the holy properties of his nature, it was incumbent thereon to provide for the honour and glory of divine holiness in an exaltation answerable unto the attempt for its debasement. Without the consideration hereof, we can have no due prospect of the actings of infinite wisdom in this great work of our redemption and recovery by the incarnation of the Son of God.

(3.) Sin brought disorder and disturbance into the whole rule and government of God. It was necessary from the infinite wisdom of God, that all things should be made in perfect order and harmony, all in a direct subordination unto his glory. There could have been no original defect in the natural or moral order of things, but it must have proceeded from a defect in wisdom. For the disposal of all things into their proper order belonged unto the contrivance thereof. And the harmony of all things among themselves, with all their mutual relations and aspects, in a regular tendency unto their proper and utmost end, whereby though every individual subsistence or being hath a pecu-

liar end of its own, yet all their actings and all their ends tend directly unto one utmost common end of them all, is the principal effect of wisdom. And thus was it at the beginning, when God himself beheld the universe, and 'lo it was exceeding good.'

All things being thus created and stated, it belonged unto the nature of God to be the rector and disposer of them all.

It was not a mere free act of his will, whereby God chose to rule and govern the creation, according unto the law of the nature of all things, and their relation unto him; but it was necessary from his divine being and excellencies, that so he should do. Wherefore it concerned both the wisdom and righteousness of God to take care that either all things should be preserved in the state wherein they were created, and no disorder be suffered to enter into the kingdom and rule of God, or that in a way suited unto them, his glory should be retrieved and re-established. For God is not the God of confusion, neither the author nor approver of it, neither in his works nor in his rule. But sin actually brought disorder into the kingdom and rule of God. And this it did not in any one particular instance, but that which was universal as unto all things here below. For the original harmony and order of all things consisted in their subordination unto the glory of God. But this they all lost, as was before declared. Hence he who looked on them in their constitution, and to manifest his complacency in them, affirmed them to be 'exceeding good,' immediately on the entrance of sin, pronounced a curse on the whole earth, and all things contained therein.

To suffer this disorder to continue unrectified, was not consistent with the wisdom and righteousness of God. It would make the kingdom of God to be like that of Satan, full of darkness and confusion. Nothing is more necessary unto the good of the universe, and without which it were better it were annihilated, than the preservation of the honour of God in his government. And this could no otherwise be done, but by the infliction of a punishment proportionable in justice unto the demerit of sin. Some think this might be done by a free dismission of sin, or a passing it over without any punishment at all. But what evidence

should we then have that good and evil were not alike, and almost equal unto God in his rule, that he doth not like sin as well as uprightness? Nor would this supposition leave any grounds of exercising justice among men. For if God in his rule of all things dismissed the greatest sin without any penalty inflicted, what reason have we to judge that evils among ourselves should at all be punished? That therefore be far from God, that the righteous should be as the wicked; 'Shall not the Judge of all the world do right?'

Wherefore the order of God's rule being broken, as it consisted in the regular obedience of the creature, and disorder with confusion being brought thereby into the kingdom and government of God; his righteousness, as it is the rectoral virtue and power of the divine nature, required that his glory should be restored, by reducing the sinning creature again into order by punishment. Justice, therefore, must be answered and complied withal herein, according unto its eternal and unanswerable law, in a way suited unto the glory of God, or the sinning creature must perish eternally.

Herein the righteousness of God, as the rectoral virtue of the divine nature, was concerned in the sin and apostacy of men. The vindication and glory of it, to provide, that in nothing it were eclipsed or diminished, was incumbent on infinite wisdom according unto the rule before laid down. That must direct and dispose of all things anew unto the glory of the righteousness of God, or there is no recovery of mankind. And in our inquiry after the impressions of divine wisdom, on the great and glorious means of our restoration under consideration, this provision made thereby for the righteousness of God in his rule and government of all, is greatly to be attended to.

(4.) Man by sin put himself into the power of the devil, God's greatest adversary. The devil had newly by rebellion and apostacy from his first condition, cast himself under the eternal displeasure and wrath of God. God had righteously purposed in himself, not to spare him, nor contrive any way for his deliverance unto eternity. He on the other side was become obdurate in his malice and hatred of God, designing his dishonour and the impeachment of his glory with the utmost of his remaining abilities. In this state of things,

man voluntarily leaves the rule and conduct of God, with all his dependence upon him, and puts himself into the power of the devil. For he believed Satan above God, that is, placed his faith and confidence in him, as unto the way of attaining blessedness and true happiness. And in whom we place our trust and confidence, them do we obey, whatever we profess. Herein did God's adversary seem for a season to triumph against him, as if he had defeated the great design of his goodness, wisdom, and power. So he would have continued to do, if no way had been provided for his disappointment.

This, therefore, also belonged unto the care of divine wisdom, namely, that the glory of God in none of the holy properties of his nature did suffer any diminution hereby.

All this, and inconceivably more than we are able to express, being contained in the sin of our apostacy from God; it must needs follow that the condition of all mankind became thereby inexpressibly evil. As we had done all the moral evil which our nature was capable to act, so it was meet we should receive all the penal evil which our nature was capable to undergo. And it all issued in death temporal and eternal, inflicted from the wrath of God.

This is the first thing to be considered in our tracing the footsteps of divine wisdom, in our deliverance by the incarnation of the Son of God. Without due conceptions of the nature of this sin and apostacy, of the provocation given unto God thereby, of the injury attempted to be done unto the glory of all his properties, of his concernment in their reparation, with the unspeakable misery that mankind was fallen into, we cannot have the least view of the glorious actings of divine wisdom in our deliverance by Christ. And therefore, the most of those who are insensible of these things, do wholly reject the principal instances of infinite wisdom in our redemption, as we shall yet see farther afterward. And the great reason why the glory of God in Christ, doth so little irradiate the minds of many, that it is so much neglected and despised, is because they are not acquainted nor affected with the nature of our first sin and apostacy, neither in itself, nor its woful effects and consequents.

But on the supposition of these things, a double inquiry

ariseth with reference unto the wisdom of God, and the other holy properties of his nature immediately concerned in our sin and apostacy.

1. Whereas man by sin had defaced the image of God, and lost it, whereby there was no representation of his holiness and righteousness left in the whole creation here below; no way of rendering any glory to him, in, for, or by, any other of his works; no means to bring man unto the enjoyment of God for which he was made. And whereas he had brought confusion and disorder into the rule and kingdom of God, which according unto the law of creation and its sanction could not be rectified but by the eternal ruin of the sinner; and had moreover given up himself unto the rule and conduct of Satan: whether I say hereon, it was meet with respect unto the holy properties of the divine nature, that all mankind should be left eternally in this condition, without remedy or relief; or whether there were not a condecency and suitableness unto them, that at least our nature in some portion of it should be restored.

2. Upon a supposition that the granting of a recovery was suited unto the holy perfections of the divine nature, acting themselves by infinite wisdom, what rays of that wisdom may we discern in the finding out and constitution of the way and means of that recovery.

The first of these I shall speak briefly unto in this place, because I have treated more largely concerning it in another. For there are many things which argue a condecency unto the divine perfections herein; namely, that mankind should not be left utterly remediless in that guilt of misery whereinto it was plunged. I shall at present only insist on one of them.

God had originally created two sorts of intellectual creatures capable of the eternal enjoyment of himself; namely, angels and men. That he would so make either sort or both, was a mere effect of his sovereign wisdom and pleasure. But on a supposition that he would so make them, they must be made for his glory. These two sorts thus created, he placed in several habitations prepared for them, suitable unto their natures, and the present duties required of them; the angels in heaven above, and men on earth below. Sin first invaded the nature of angels, and cast innumerable mul-

titudes of them out of their primitive condition. Hereby they lost their capacity of, and right unto, that enjoyment of God, which their nature was prepared and made meet for. Neither would God ever restore them thereunto. And in the instance of dealing with them, when he 'spared them not, but shut them up in chains of everlasting darkness unto the judgment of the great day,' he manifested how righteous it was to leave sinning apostate creatures in everlasting misery. If any thing of relief be provided for any of them, it is a mere effect of sovereign grace and wisdom, whereunto God was no way obliged. Howbeit the whole angelical nature that was created in a capacity for the eternal enjoyment of God, perished not. Nor doth it seem consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, that the whole entire species or kind of creatures made capable of glory in the eternal enjoyment of him, should at once immediately be excluded from it. That such a thing should fall out as it were accidently without divine provision and disposal, would argue a defect in wisdom, and a possibility of a surprisal into the loss of the whole glory he designed in the creation of all things. And to have it a mere effect of divine ordination and disposal, is as little consistent with his goodness. Wherefore, the same nature which sinned and perished in the angels that fell, abideth in the enjoyment of God, in those myriads of blessed spirits, which 'left not their first habitation.'

The nature of man was in like manner made capable of the eternal enjoyment of God. This was the end for which it was created, unto the glory of him by whom it was made. For it became the divine wisdom and goodness, to give unto every thing an operation and end suited unto its capacity. And these in this race of intellectual creatures, were to live unto God, and to come unto the eternal enjoyment of him. This operation and end their nature being capable of, they being suited unto it, unto them it was designed. But sin entered them also; we also 'sinned and came short of the glory of God.' The inquiry hereon is, whether it became the divine goodness and wisdom that this whole nature, in all that were partakers of it, should fail and come short of that end for which alone it was made of God. For whereas the angels stood in their primitive condition every one in his

own individual person, the sin of some did not prejudice others, who did not sin actually themselves. But the whole race of mankind stood all in one common head and state; from whom they were to be educed and derived by natural generation. The sin and apostacy of that one person, was the sin and apostacy of us all. 'In him all sinned and died.' Wherefore, unless there be a recovery made of them, or of some from among them, that whole species of intellectual nature, the whole kind of it, in all its individuals, which was made capable of doing the will of God, so as to come unto the eternal fruition of him, must be eternally lost and excluded from it. This we may say became not the wisdom and goodness of God, no more than it would have done to have suffered the whole angelical nature in all its individuals to have perished for ever. No created understanding could have been able to discern the glory of God in such a dispensation, whereby it would have had no glory. That the whole nature in all the individuals of it, which was framed by the power of God out of nothing, and made what it was for this very end, that it might glorify him, and come unto the enjoyment of him, should eternally perish, if any way of relief for any portion of it were possible unto infinite wisdom, doth not give an amiable representation of the divine excellencies unto us.

It was therefore left on the provision of infinite wisdom, that this great effect of recovering a portion of fallen mankind out of this miserable estate, wherein there was a suitableness, a condecency unto the divine excellencies, should be produced. Only it was to be done on and by a free act of the will of God; for otherwise there was no obligation on him from any of his properties so to do.

But it may be yet said on the other side, that the nature of man was so defiled, so depraved, so corrupted, so alienated and separated from God, so obnoxious unto the curse by its sin and apostacy, that it was not reparable to the glory of God; and therefore it would not argue any defect in divine power, nor any unsuitableness unto divine wisdom and goodness, if it were not actually repaired and restored. I answer two things.

(1.) The horrible nature of the first sin, and the heinousness of our apostacy from God therein, were such and so

great, as that God thereon might righteously and suitably unto all the holy properties of his nature, leave mankind to perish eternally in that condition whereinto they had cast themselves. And if he had utterly forsaken the whole race of mankind in that condition, and left them all as remediless as the fallen angels, there could have been no reflection on his goodness, and an evident suitableness unto his justice and holiness. Wherefore, wherever there is any mention in the Scripture of the redemption or restoration of mankind, it is constantly proposed as an effect of mere sovereign grace and mercy. See Eph.i. 3—11. And those who pretend a great difficulty at present in the reconciliation of the eternal perishing of the greatest part of mankind, with those notions we have of the divine goodness, seem not to have sufficiently considered what was contained in our original apostacy from God; nor the righteousness of God in dealing with the angels that sinned. For when man had voluntarily broken all the relation of love and moral good between God and him, had defaced his image, the only representation of his holiness and righteousness in this lower world, and deprived him of all his glory from the works of his hands, and had put himself into the society, and under the conduct of the devil; what dishonour could it have been unto God, what diminution would there have been of his glory, if he had left him unto his own choice, to eat for ever of the fruit of his own ways, and to be filled with his own devices unto eternity? It is only infinite wisdom that could find out a way for the salvation of any one of the whole race of mankind, so as that it might be reconciled unto the glory of his holiness, righteousness, and rule. Wherefore, as we ought always to admire sovereign grace in the few that shall be saved; so we have no ground to reflect on divine goodness in the multitudes that perish, especially considering that they all voluntarily continue in their sin and apostacy.

(2.) I grant the nature of man was not reparable nor recoverable, by any such actings of the properties of God as he had exerted in the creation and rule of all things. Were there not other properties of the divine nature than what were discovered and revealed in the creation of all; were not some of them so declared capable of an exercise in another way or in higher degrees than what had as yet been

instanced in, it must be acknowledged that the reparation of mankind could not be conceived compliant with the divine excellencies nor to be effected by them. I shall give one instance in each sort, namely, first in properties of another kind than any which had been manifested in the works of creation, and then the actings of some of them so manifested, in another way, or farther degree than what they were before exerted in or by.

[1.] Of the first sort, are love, grace, and mercy, which I refer unto one head, their nature being the same, as they have respect unto sinners. For although these were none of them manifested in the works of creation, yet are they no less essential properties of the divine nature, than either power, goodness, or wisdom. With these it was that the reparation of our nature was compliant, unto them it had a condecency, and the glory of them infinite wisdom designed therein. That wisdom on which it is incumbent to provide for the manifestation of all the other properties of God's nature, contrived this work unto the glory of his love, mercy, and grace, as in the gospel it is every where declared.

[2.] Of the second sort is divine goodness. This as the communicative property of the divine nature, had exerted itself in the creation of all things. Howbeit it had not done so perfectly, it had not done so to the uttermost. But the nature of goodness being communicative, it belongs unto its perfection, to act itself unto the uttermost. This it had not yet done in the creation. Therein 'God made man,' and acted his goodness in the communication of our being unto us, with all its endowments. But there yet remained another effect of it, which was that God should be made man, as the way unto, and the means of, our recovery.

These things being premised, we proceed to inquire more particularly by what way and means the recovery of mankind might be wrought, so as that God might be glorified thereby.

If fallen man be restored and reinstated in his primitive condition, or brought into a better, it must either be by himself, or by some other undertaking for him. For it must be done by some means or other. So great an alteration in the whole state of things was made by the entrance of sin, that it was not consistent with the glory of any of the di-

vine excellencies, that a restoration of all things should be made by a mere act of power, without the use of any means for the removal of the cause of that alteration. That man himself could not be this means, that is, that he could not restore himself, is openly evident. Two ways there were whereby he might attempt it, and neither jointly nor severally could he do any thing in them.

1. He might do it by returning unto obedience unto God on his own accord. He fell off from God on his own accord by disobedience, through the suggestion of Satan. Wherefore, a voluntary return unto his former obedience, would seem to reduce all things unto their first estate. But this way was both impossible, and upon a supposition of it, would have been insufficient unto the end designed. For,

(1.) This he could not do. He had by his sin and fall lost that power whereby he was able to yield any acceptable obedience unto God. And a return unto obedience, is an act of greater power, than a persistency in the way and course of it, and more is required thereunto. But all man's original power of obedience consisted in the image of God. This he had defaced in himself, and deprived himself of. Having therefore lost that power which should have enabled him to live unto God in his primitive condition, he could not retain a greater power in the same kind to return thereunto. This indeed was that which Satan deceived and deluded him withal; namely, that by his disobedience he should acquire new light and power, which he had not yet received; he should be 'like unto God.' But he was so far from any advantage by his apostacy, that one part of his misery consisted in the loss of all power or ability to live to God.

This is the folly of that Pelagian heresy, which is now a third time attempting to impose itself on the Christian world. It supposeth that men have a power of their own to return unto God, after they had lost the power they had of abiding with him. It is not indeed as yet pretended by many, that the first sin was a mere transient act, that no way vitiated our nature, or impaired the power, faculty, or principle of obedience in us. A wound, they say, a disease, a weakness, it brought upon us, and rendered us legally obnoxious unto death temporal, which we were naturally liable unto before. Wherefore it is not said that men can return unto that per-

fect obedience which the law required; but that they can comply with, and perform that which the gospel requireth in the room thereof. For they seem to suppose, that the gospel is not much more but an accommodation of the rule of obedience unto our present reason and abilities, with some motives unto it, and an example for it in the personal obedience and suffering of Christ. For whereas man forsook the law of obedience first prescribed unto him, and fell into various incapacities of observing it, God did not, as they suppose, provide in and by the gospel a righteousness whereby the law might be fulfilled, and effectual grace to raise up the nature of man unto the performance of acceptable obedience; but only brings down the law and the rule of it into a compliance unto our weakened, diseased, depraved nature; than which, if any thing can be spoken more dishonourably of the gospel, I know it not. However this pretended power of returning unto some kind of obedience, but not that which was required of us in our primitive condition, is no way sufficient unto our restoration, as is evident unto all.

(2.) As man could not effect his own recovery, so he would not attempt it. For he was fallen into that condition wherein, in the principles of all his moral operations, he was at enmity against God; and whatever did befall him, he would choose to continue in his state of apostacy. For he was wholly 'alienated from the life of God.' He likes it not, as that which is incompliant with his dispositions, inclinations, and desires, as inconsistent with every thing wherein he placeth his interest. And hence as he cannot do what he should through impotency, he will not even do what he can through obstinacy. It may be we know not distinctly what to ascribe unto men's impotency, and what unto his obstinacy; but between both, he neither can nor will return unto God. And his power unto good, though not sufficient to bring him again unto God, yet is it not so small but that he always chooseth not to make use of it unto that end. In brief, there was left in man a fear of divine power, a fear of God because of his greatness, which makes him do many things which otherwise he would not do; but there is not left in him any love unto divine goodness, without which he cannot choose to return unto God.

(3.) But let us leave these things which men will dispute about, though in express contradiction unto the Scripture and the experience of them that are wrought upon to believe; and let us make an impossible supposition, that man could and would return unto his primitive obedience, yet no reparation of the glory of God suffering in the loss of the former state of all things would thereon ensue. What satisfaction would be hereby made for the injury offered unto the holiness, righteousness, and wisdom of God, whose violation in their blessed effects was the principal evil of sin? Notwithstanding such a supposition, all the disorder that was brought into the rule and government of God by sin, with the reflection of dishonour upon him, in the rejection of his image, would still continue. And such a restitution of things, wherein no provision is made for the reparation of the glory of God, is not to be admitted. The notion of it may possibly please men in their apostate condition, wherein they are wholly turned off from God, and into self; not caring what becomes of his glory, so it may go well with themselves. But it is highly contradictory unto all equity, justice, and the whole reason of things, wherein the glory of God is the principal and centre of all.

Practically things are otherwise among many. The most profligate sinners in the world that have a conviction of an eternal condition, would be saved. Tell them it is inconsistent with the glory of the holiness, righteousness, and truth of God, to save unbelieving impenitent sinners, they are not concerned in it. Let them be saved, that is, eternally delivered from the evil they fear, and let God look unto his own glory; they take no care about it. A soul that is spiritually ingenuous, would not be saved in any way but that whereby God may be glorified. Indeed, to be saved, and not unto the glory of God, implies a contradiction. For our salvation is eternal blessedness, in a participation of the glory of God.

Secondly, It followeth, therefore, that man must make satisfaction unto the justice of God, and thereby a reparation of his glory that he may be saved. This, added unto a complete return unto obedience, would effect a restitution of all things; it would do so as unto what was past, though it would make no new addition of glory unto God.

But this became not the nature and efficacy of divine wisdom. It became it not merely to retrieve what was past, without a new manifestation and exaltation of the divine excellencies. And therefore, in our restitution by Christ, there is such a manifestation and exaltation of the divine properties, as incomparably exceeds whatever could have ensued on, or been effected by the law of creation, had man continued in his original obedience. But at present it is granted that this addition of satisfaction unto a return unto obedience, would restore all things unto their first condition. But as that return was impossible unto man, so was this satisfaction for the injury done by sin much more. For suppose a mere creature, such as man is, such as all men are, in what condition you please, and under all advantageous circumstances, yet, whatever he can do towards God, is antecedently and absolutely due from him in that instant wherein he doth it, and that in the manner wherein it is done. They must all say when they have done all that they can do, 'we are unprofitable servants, we have done what was our duty.' Wherefore it is impossible that by any thing a man can do well, he should make satisfaction for any thing he hath done ill. For what he so doth, is due in and for itself. And to suppose that satisfaction will be made for a former fault, by that whose omission would have been another, had the former never been committed, is madness. An old debt cannot be discharged with ready money for new commodities; nor can past injuries be compensated by present duties, which we are anew obliged unto. Wherefore mankind, being indispensably and eternally obliged unto the present performance of all duties of obedience unto God, according to the utmost of their capacity and ability, so as that the non-performance of them in their season, both as unto their matter and manner, would be their sin, it is utterly impossible that by any thing, or all that they can do, they should make the least satisfaction unto God for any thing they have done against him; much less for the horrible apostacy whereof we treat. And to attempt the same end by any way which God hath not appointed, which he hath not made their duty, is a new provocation of the highest nature. See Micah vi. 6—8.

It is therefore evident on all these considerations, that

all mankind as unto any endeavours of their own, any thing that can be fancied as possible for them to design or do, must be left irreparable in a condition of eternal misery. And unless we have a full conviction hereof, we can neither admire nor entertain the mystery of the wisdom of God in our reparation. And therefore it hath been the design of Satan in all ages, to contrive presumptuous notions of men's spiritual abilities, to divert their minds from the contemplation of the glory of divine wisdom and grace, as alone exalted in our recovery.

We are proceeding on this supposition, that there was a condecency unto the holy perfections of the divine nature, that mankind should be restored, or some portion of it recovered unto the enjoyment of himself; so angelical nature was preserved unto the same end in those that did not sin. And we have shewed the general grounds whereon it is impossible that fallen man should restore or recover himself. Wherefore we must, in the next place, inquire what is necessary unto such a restoration, on the account of that concernment of the divine excellencies in the sin and apostacy of man, which we have stated before. For hereby we may obtain light, and an insight into the glory of that wisdom whereby it was contrived and effected. And the things following among others may be observed unto that end.

1. It was required that there should be an obedience yielded unto God, bringing more glory unto him, than dishonour did arise and accrue from the disobedience of man. This was due unto the glory of divine holiness in giving of the law. Until this was done, the excellency of the law as becoming the holiness of God, and as an effect thereof could not be made manifest. For if it were never kept in any instance, never fulfilled by any one person in the world, how should the glory of it be declared? how should the holiness of God be represented by it? how should it be evident that the transgression of it was not rather from some defect in the law itself, than from any evil in them that should have yielded obedience unto it? The obedience yielded by the angels that stood and sinned not, made it manifest that the transgression of it by them that fell and sinned, was from their own wills, and not from any unsuitableness unto their nature and state in the law itself. But

if the law given unto man should never be complied withal in perfect obedience by any one whatever, it might be thought that the law itself was unsuited unto our nature, and impossible to be complied withal. Nor did it become infinite wisdom to give a law, whose equity, righteousness, and holiness, should never be exemplified in obedience; should never be made to appear, but in the punishment inflicted on its transgressors. Wherefore the original law of personal righteousness was not given solely nor primarily that men might suffer justly for its transgression, but that God might be glorified in its accomplishment. If this be not done, it is impossible that men should be restored unto the glory of God. If the law be not fulfilled by obedience, man must suffer evermore for his disobedience, or God must lose the manifestation of his holiness therein. Besides, God had represented his holiness in that image of it which was implanted on our nature, and which was the principle enabling us unto obedience. This also was rejected by sin, and therein the holiness of God despised. If this be not restored in our nature, and that with advantages above what it had in its first communication, we cannot be recovered unto the glory of God.

2. It was necessary that the disorder brought into the rule and government of God by sin and rebellion should be rectified. This could no otherwise be done but by the infliction of that punishment, which in the unalterable rule and standard of divine justice was due thereunto. The dismission of sin on any other terms, would leave the rule of God under unspeakable dishonour and confusion. For where is the righteousness of government, if the highest sin and provocation that our nature was capable of, and which brought confusion on the whole creation below, should for ever go unpunished? The first express intimation that God gave of his righteousness in the government of mankind, was his threatening a punishment equal unto the demerit of disobedience, if man should fall into it. 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die.' If he revoke and disannul this sentence, how shall the glory of his righteousness in the rule of all be made known? But how this punishment should be undergone, which consisted in man's eternal ruin, and yet man be eternally saved, was a work for divine wisdom to con-

trive. This therefore was necessary unto the honour of God's righteousness, as he is the supreme Governor and Judge of all the earth.

3. It was necessary that Satan should be justly despoiled of his advantage and power over mankind unto the glory of God. For he was not to be left to triumph in his success. And inasmuch as man was on his part rightfully given up unto him, his deliverance was not to be wrought by an act of absolute dominion and power, but in a way of justice and lawful judgment; which things shall be afterward spoken unto.

Without these things the recovery of mankind into the favour and unto the enjoyment of God was utterly impossible, on the account of the concernment of the glory of his divine perfections in our sin and apostacy.

How all this might be effected; how the glory of the holiness and righteousness of God in his law and rule, and in the primitive constitution of our nature might be repaired; how his goodness, love, grace, and mercy might be manifested and exalted in this work of the reparation of mankind, was left unto the care and contrivance of infinite wisdom. From the eternal springs thereof must this work arise, or cease for ever.

To trace some of the footsteps of divine wisdom herein, in and from the revelation of it by its effects, is that which lieth before us. And sundry things appear to have been necessary hereunto. As

1. That all things required unto our restoration, the whole work wherein they consist, must be wrought in our own nature, in the nature that had sinned, and which was to be restored and brought unto glory. On supposition, I say, of the salvation of our nature, no satisfaction can be made unto the glory of God for the sin of that nature, but in the nature itself that sinned and is to be saved. For whereas God gave the law unto man as an effect of his wisdom and holiness, which he transgressed in his disobedience; wherein could the glory of them or either of them be exalted, if the same law were complied withal and fulfilled in and by a nature of another kind, suppose that of angels? For notwithstanding any such obedience, yet the law might be unsuited unto the nature of man whereunto it was originally pre-

scribed. Wherefore there would be a veil drawn over the glory of God, in giving the law unto man, if it were not fulfilled by obedience in the same nature. Nor can there be any such relation between the obedience and sufferings of one nature, in the stead and for the disobedience of another, as that glory might ensue unto the wisdom, holiness, and justice of God, in the deliverance of that other nature thereon.

The Scripture abounds in the declaration of the necessity hereof, with its condecency unto divine wisdom. Speaking of the way of our relief and recovery; 'Verily,' saith the apostle, 'he took not on him the nature of angels;' Heb. ii. 16. Had it been the recovery of angels which he designed, he would have taken their nature on him. But this would have been no relief at all unto us, no more than the assuming of our nature is of advantage unto the fallen angels; the obedience and sufferings of Christ therein, extended not at all unto them, nor was it just or equal that they should be relieved thereby. What then was required unto our deliverance? why, saith he, 'forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;' ver. 14. It was human nature (here expressed by flesh and blood) that was to be delivered, and therefore it was human nature wherein this deliverance was to be wrought. This the same apostle disputes at large, Rom. v. 12—19. The sum is, that as 'by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one' (of one man Christ Jesus, ver. 15.) 'are many made righteous.' The same nature that sinned must work out the reparation and recovery from sin. So he affirms again, 1 Cor. xv. 21. 'For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead.' No otherwise could our ruin be retrieved, nor our deliverance from sin with all the consequents of it be effected which came by man, which were committed and deserved in and by our nature, but by man, by one of the same nature with us. This therefore in the first place became the wisdom of God, that the work of deliverance should be wrought in our own nature, in the nature that had sinned.

2. That part of human nature, wherein or whereby this work was to be effected, as unto the essence or substance of it, was to be derived from the common root or stock of the

same nature, in our first parents. It would not suffice hereunto, that God should create a man out of the dust of the earth, or out of nothing of the same nature in general with ourselves. For there would be no cognation or alliance between him and us, so that we should be any way concerned in what he did or suffered. For this alliance depends solely hereon, 'that God hath of one blood made all nations of men;' Acts xvii. 26. Hence it is that the genealogy of Christ is given us in the gospel, not only from Abraham, to declare the faithfulness of God in the promise that he should be of his seed, but from Adam also, to manifest his relation unto the common stock of our nature, and unto all mankind therein.

The first discovery of the wisdom of God herein, was in that primitive revelation, that the deliverer should be of 'the seed of the woman;' Gen. iii. 15. No other but he who was so could 'break the serpent's head,' or 'destroy the work of the devil,' so as that we might be delivered and restored. He was not only to be partaker of our nature, but he was so to be, by being 'the seed of the woman;' Gal. iv. 4. He was not to be created out of nothing, nor to be made of the dust of the earth, but so 'made of a woman,' as that thereby he might receive our nature from the common root and spring of it. Thus he 'who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one,' Heb. ii. 11. ἐξ ἑνὸς, that is, φυράματος, of the same mass, of one nature and blood; whence he is not ashamed to call them brethren. This also was to be brought forth from the treasures of infinite wisdom.

3. This nature of ours, wherein the work of our recovery and salvation is to be wrought and performed, was not to be so derived from the original stock of our kind or race, as to bring along with it the same taint of sin, and the same liableness unto guilt, upon its own account, as accompany every other individual person in the world. For, as the apostle speaks, 'such a high-priest became us' (and as a high-priest was he to accomplish this work), 'as was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.' For, if this nature in him were so defiled as it is in us; if it were under a deprivation of the image of God, as it is in our persons before our renovation, it could do nothing that should be ac-

ceptable unto him. And if it were subject unto guilt on its own account, it could make no satisfaction for the sin of others. Here, therefore, again occurs *nodus vindice dignus*, a difficulty which nothing but divine wisdom could expedite.

To take a little farther view hereof, we must consider on what grounds these things (spiritual defilement and guilt) do adhere unto our nature as they are in all our individual persons. And the first of these is, that our entire nature, as unto our participation of it, was in Adam, as our head and representative. Hence his sin became the sin of us all, is justly imputed unto us, and charged on us. 'In him we all sinned;' all did so who were in him as their common representative when he sinned. Hereby we became the natural 'children of wrath,' or liable unto the wrath of God for the common sin of our nature, in the natural and legal head or spring of it. And the other is, that we derive our nature from Adam by the way of natural generation. By that means alone is the nature of our first parents as defiled communicated unto us. For by this means do we become to appertain unto the stock, as it was degenerate and corrupt. Wherefore that part of our nature, wherein and whereby this great work was to be wrought, must, as unto its essence and substance, be derived from our first parents, yet so as never to have been in Adam as a common representative; nor be derived from him by natural generation.

The bringing forth of our nature in such an instance, wherein it should relate no less really and truly unto the first Adam than we do ourselves, whereby there is the strictest alliance of nature between him so partaker of it, and us, yet so, as not in the least to participate of the guilt of the first sin, nor of the defilement of our nature thereby, must be an effect of infinite wisdom, beyond the conceptions of any created understanding. And this, as we know, was done in the person of Christ; for his human nature was never in Adam as his representative, nor was he comprised in the covenant wherein he stood. For he derived it legally, only from and after the first promise, when Adam ceased to be a common person. Nor did it proceed from him by natural generation, the only means of the derivation of its depravation and pollution. For it was a 'holy thing,' created in the womb of the Virgin by the

power of the Most High. 'O the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God!'

It was necessary therefore on all these considerations, it was so unto the glory of the holy properties of the divine nature, and the reparation of the honour of his holiness and righteousness, that he by whom the work of our recovery was to be wrought, should be a man, partaker of the nature that sinned, yet free from all sin, and all the consequents of it. And this did divine wisdom contrive and accomplish in the human nature of Jesus Christ.

But yet, in the second place, on all the considerations before-mentioned, it is no less evident, that this work could not be wrought or effected by him who was no more than a mere man, who had no nature but ours, who was a human person, and no more. There was no one act which he was to perform, in order unto our deliverance, but did require a divine power to render it efficacious. But herein lies that great mystery of godliness, whereunto a continual opposition hath been made by the gates of hell, as we manifested in the entrance of this discourse. But whereas it belongs unto the foundation of our faith, we must inquire into it, and confirm the truth of it with such demonstrations as divine revelation doth accommodate us withal. And three things are to be spoken unto.

First, We are to give in rational evidences, that the recovery of mankind was not to be effected by any one who was a mere man, and no more, though it were absolutely necessary that a man he should be; he must be God also.

Secondly, We must inquire into the suitableness or condecency unto divine wisdom, in the redemption and salvation of the church by Jesus Christ, who was God and man in one person. And thereon give a description of the person of Christ and its constitution, which suiteth all the ends of infinite wisdom in this glorious work. The first of these falls under sundry plain demonstrations.

1. That human nature might be restored, or any portion of mankind be eternally saved unto the glory of God, it was necessary, as we proved before, that an obedience should be yielded unto God and his law, which should give and bring more glory and honour unto his holiness, than there was dishonour reflected on it, by the disobedience of us all.

Those who are otherwise minded, care not what becomes of the glory of God, so that wicked, sinful man may be saved one way or other. But these thoughts spring out of our apostacy, and belong not unto that estate wherein we loved God above all, and preferred his glory above all, as it was with us at the first in the original constitution of our nature. But such an obedience could never be yielded unto God by any mere creature whatever; not by any one who was only a man, however dignified and exalted in state and condition above all others. For to suppose that God should be pleased and glorified with the obedience of any one man, more than he was displeased and dishonoured by the disobedience of Adam, and all his posterity, is to fancy things that have no ground in reason or justice, or any way suitable unto divine wisdom and holiness. He who undertaketh this work must have somewhat that is divine and infinite to put an infinite value on his obedience; that is, he must be God.

2. The obedience of such a one, of a mere man, could have no influence at all on the recovery of mankind, nor the salvation of the church. For whatever it were, it would be all due from him for himself, and so could only profit or benefit himself. For what is due from any on his own account, cannot redound or be reckoned unto the advantage of another. But there is no mere creature, nor can there be any such, but he is obliged for himself unto all the obedience unto God, that he is capable of the performance of in this world, as we have before declared. Yea, universal obedience in all possible instances is so absolutely necessary unto him as a creature made in dependence on God, and for the enjoyment of him, that the voluntary omission of it in any one instance, would be a criminal disobedience, ruinous unto his own soul. Wherefore, no such obedience could be accepted as any kind of compensation for the disobedience of others, or in their stead. He then that performs this obedience must be one who was not originally obliged thereunto, on his own account or for himself. And this must be a divine person and none other; for every mere creature is so obliged. And there is nothing more fundamental in gospel principles, than that the Lord Christ in his divine person was above the law, and for himself owed no obedience there-

unto. But by his own condescension, as he was made of a woman for us, so he was made under the law for us. And therefore, those by whom the divine person of Christ is denied, do all of them contend that he yielded obedience unto God for himself, and not for us. But herein they bid defiance unto the principal effect of divine wisdom, wherein God will be eternally glorified.

3. The people to be freed, redeemed, and brought unto glory, were great and innumerable; 'a great multitude which no man can number;' Rev. vii. 9. The sins which they were to be delivered, ransomed, and justified from, for which a propitiation was to be made, were next unto absolutely infinite. They wholly surpass the comprehension of any created understanding, or the compass of imagination. And in every one of them there was something reductively infinite, as committed against an infinite majesty. The miseries which hereon all these persons were obnoxious unto, were infinite, because eternal; or all that evil which our nature is capable to suffer, was by them all eternally to be undergone.

By all these persons, in all these sins, there was an inroad made on the rule and government of God, an affront given unto his justice in the violation of his law. Nor can any of them be delivered from the consequents hereof in eternal misery, without a compensation and satisfaction made unto the justice of God. To assert the contrary, is to suppose that upon the matter, it is all one to him whether he be obeyed or disobeyed, whether he be honoured or dishonoured in and by his creatures. And this is all one as to deny his very being; seein g itopposeth the glory of his essential properties. Now to suppose that a mere man, by his temporary suffering of external pains, should make satisfaction unto the justice of God for all the sins of all these persons so as it should be right and just with him, not only to save and deliver them from all the evils they were liable unto, but also to bring them unto life and glory, is to constitute a mediation between God and man that should consist in appearance and ostentation, and not be an effect of divine wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, nor have its foundation in the nature and equity of things themselves. For the things supposed will not be reduced unto any rules

of justice or proportion, that one of them should be conceived in any sense to answer unto the other; that is, there is nothing which answers any rule, notions, or conceptions of justice; nothing that might be exemplary unto men in the punishment of crimes, that the sins of an infinite number of men, deserving every one of them eternal death, should be expiated by the temporary sufferings of one mere man, so as to demonstrate the righteousness of God in the punishment of sin. But God doth not do these things for shew or appearance, but according unto the real exigence of the holy properties of his nature. And on that supposition there must be a proportion between the things themselves, namely, the sufferings of one, and the deliverance of all.

Nor could the faith of man ever find a stable foundation to fix upon on the supposition before-mentioned. No faith is able to conflict with this objection, that the sufferings of one mere man should be accepted with God as a just compensation for the sins of the whole church. Men who in things of this nature satisfy themselves with notions and fancies may digest such suppositions; but those who make use of faith for their own delivery from under a conviction of sin, the nature and demerit of it, with a sense of the wrath of God, and the curse of the law against it, can find no relief in such notions or apprehensions. But it became the wisdom of God, in the dispensation of himself herein unto the church, so to order things, as that faith might have an immoveable rock to build upon. This alone it hath in the person of Christ, God and man, his obedience and sufferings. Wherefore, those by whom the divine nature of the Lord Christ is denied, do all of them absolutely deny also that he made any satisfaction unto divine justice for sin. They will rather swallow all the absurdities which the absolute dismission of sin without satisfaction or punishment doth bring along with it, than grant that a mere man could make any such satisfaction by his temporary sufferings for the sins of the world. And on the other hand, whoever doth truly and sincerely believe the divine person of Christ, namely, that he was God and man in one person, and as such a person acted in the whole work of mediation, he cannot shut his eyes against the glorious light of this truth,

that what he did and suffered in that work, must have an intrinsic worth and excellency in it, out-balancing all the evil in the sins of mankind; that more honour and glory accrued unto the holiness and law of God by his obedience, than dishonour was cast on them by the disobedience of Adam and all his posterity.

4. The way whereby the church was to be recovered and saved was by such works and actings, as one should take on himself to perform in the way of an office committed unto him for that end. For whereas man could not recover, ransom, nor save himself, as we have proved, the whole must be wrought for him by another. The undertaking hereof by another, must depend on the infinite wisdom, counsel, and pleasure of God, with the will and consent of him who was to undertake it. So also did the constitution of the way and means in particular whereby this deliverance was to be wrought. Hereon it became his office to do the things which were required unto that end. But we have before proved apart by itself that no office unto this purpose could be discharged towards God, or the whole church, by any one who was a man only. I shall not therefore here farther insist upon it, although there be good argument in it unto our present purpose.

5. If man be recovered, he must be restored into the same state, condition, and dignity, wherein he was placed before the fall. To restore him with any diminution of honour and blessedness, was not suited unto divine wisdom and bounty. Yea, seeing it was the infinite grace, goodness, and mercy of God to restore him, it seems agreeable unto the glory of divine excellencies in their operations, that he should be brought into a better and more honourable condition than that which he had lost. But before the fall, man was not subject nor obedient unto any but unto God alone. Somewhat less he was in dignity than the angels, howbeit he owed them no obedience, they were his fellow-servants. And as for all other things here below, they were made 'subject unto him, and put under his feet,' he himself being in subjection unto God alone. But if he were redeemed and restored by one who was a mere creature, he could not be restored unto this state and dignity. For on all grounds of right and equity, he must owe all service and

obedience unto him by whom he was redeemed, restored, and recovered, as the author of the state wherein he is. For when we are 'bought with a price, we are not our own,' as the apostle affirms; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. We are therefore his who hath bought us, and him are we bound to serve in our souls and bodies which are his. Accordingly in the purchase of us, the Lord Christ became our absolute Lord, unto whom we owe all religious subjection of soul and conscience; Rom. xiv. 7—9. It would follow therefore that if we were redeemed and recovered by the interposition of a mere creature, if such a one were our Redeemer, Saviour, and Deliverer, into the service of a mere creature, that is, religious service and obedience, we should be recovered. And so they believe who affirm the Lord Christ to be a man and no more. But on this supposition we are so far from an advancement in state and dignity by our restoration, that we do not recover what we were first instated in. For it belonged thereunto, that we should owe religious service and obedience unto him alone who was God by nature over all blessed for ever. And they bring all confusion into Christian religion, who make a mere creature the object of our faith, love, adoration, invocation, and all sacred worship. But in our present restoration we are made subject anew as unto religious service only unto God alone. Therefore the holy angels, the head of the creation, do openly disclaim any such service and veneration from us, because they are only the fellow-servants of them that have the testimony of Jesus; Rev. xix. 10. Nor hath God put the 'world to come,' the gospel state of the church into subjection unto angels or any other creature, but only unto the Son, who is Lord over his own house, even he that made all things, who is God; Heb. iii. 4—6. Wherefore we are restored into our primitive condition to be in spiritual subjection unto God alone. He therefore by whom we are restored, unto whom we owe all obedience and religious service, is, and ought to be God also. And as they utterly overthrow the gospel who affirm that all the obedience of it is due unto him who is a man and no more, as do all by whom the divine nature of Christ is denied; so they debase themselves beneath the dignity of the state of redemption, and cast dishonour on the mediation of Christ, who subject

themselves in any religious service to saints or angels, or any other creatures whatever.

On these suppositions, which are full of light and evidence, infinite wisdom did interpose itself, to glorify all the other concerned excellencies of the glory of God, in such a way as might solve all difficulties, and satisfy all the ends of God's glory, in the recovery and redemption of mankind. The case before it was as followeth.

Man by sin had cast the most inconceivable dishonour on the righteousness, holiness, goodness, and rule of God, and himself into the guilt of eternal ruin. In this state it became the wisdom and goodness of God, neither to suffer the whole race of mankind to come short eternally of that enjoyment of himself for which it was created, nor yet to deliver any one of them, without a retrieval of the eternal honour of his righteousness, holiness, and rule, from the diminution and waste that was made of it by sin. As this could no way be done, but by a full satisfaction unto justice and an obedience unto the law, bringing and yielding more honour unto the holiness and righteousness of God, than they could any way lose by the sin and disobedience of man; so this satisfaction must be made, and this obedience be yielded in and by the same nature that sinned or disobeyed, whereby alone the residue of mankind may be interested in the benefits and effects of that obedience, and satisfaction. Yet was it necessary hereunto, that the nature wherein all this was to be performed, though derived from the same common stock with that whereof in all our persons we are partakers, should be absolutely free from the contagion and guilt, which with it, and by it are communicated unto our persons, from that common stock. Unless it were so, there could be no undertaking in it for others, it would not be able to answer for itself. But yet on all these suppositions, no undertaking, no performance of duty, in human nature could possibly yield that obedience unto God, or make that satisfaction for sin, whereon the deliverance of others might ensue, unto the glory of the holiness, righteousness, and rule of God.

In this state of things did infinite wisdom interpose itself, in that glorious ineffable contrivance of the person of Christ, or of the divine nature in the eternal Son of God,

and of ours in the same individual person. Otherwise this work could not be accomplished; at least all other ways are hidden from the eyes of all living, no created understanding being able to apprehend any other way whereby it might so have been unto the eternal glory of God. This therefore is such an effect of divine wisdom, as will be the object of holy adoration and admiration unto eternity; as unto this life, how little a portion is it we know of its excellency?

CHAP. XVII.

Other evidences of divine wisdom in the contrivance of the work of redemption, in and by the person of Christ, in effects evidencing a condecency thereunto.

THAT which remains of our present inquiry, is concerning those evidences of divine condecency or suitableness unto infinite wisdom and goodness, which we may gather from the nature of this work, and its effects, as expressed in divine revelation. Some few instances hereof I shall choose out from amongst many that might be insisted on.

1. Man was made to serve God in all things. In his person, in his soul and body, in all his faculties, powers, and senses, in all that was given unto him or intrusted with him, he was not his own, but every way a servant, in all that he was, in all that he had, in all that he did or was to do. This he was made for, this state and condition was necessary unto him as a creature. It could be no otherwise with any that was so, it was so with the angels who were greater in dignity and power than man. The very name of creature includes the condition of universal subjection and service unto the Creator. This condition in and by his sin, Adam designed to desert, and to free himself from. He would exalt himself out of the state of service and obedience, absolute and universal, into a condition of self-sufficiency of domination and rule. He would be as God, like unto God, that is, subject no more to him, be in no more dependence on him, but advance his own will above the

will of God. And there is somewhat of this in every sin; the sinner would advance his own will in opposition unto, and above the will of God. But what was the event hereof? Man by endeavouring to free himself from absolute subjection and universal service, to invade absolute dominion, fell into absolute and eternal ruin.

For our recovery out of this state and condition, considering how we cast ourselves into it, the way insisted on, was found out by divine wisdom, namely, the incarnation of the Son of God. For he was Lord of all, had absolute dominion over all, owed no service, no obedience for himself, being in the form of God, and equal unto him. From this state of absolute dominion, he descended into a condition of absolute service. As Adam sinned and fell by leaving that state of absolute service which was due unto him, proper unto his nature, inseparable from it, to attempt a state of absolute dominion, which was not his own, not due unto him, not consistent with his nature; so the Son of God, being made the second Adam, relieved us by descending from a state of absolute dominion, which was his own, due to his nature, to take on him a state of absolute service, which was not his own, nor due unto him. And this being inconsistent with his own divine nature, he performed it, by taking our nature on him, making it his own. He descended as much beneath himself in his self-humiliation, as Adam designed to ascend above himself in his pride and self-exaltation.

The consideration of the divine grace and wisdom herein, the apostle proposeth unto us, Phil. ii. 6—8. 'Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Adam being in the form, that is, the state and condition of a servant, did by robbery attempt to take upon him the 'form of God,' or to make himself equal unto him. The Lord Christ being in the 'form of God,' that is, his essential form of the same nature with him, accounted it no robbery to be in the state and condition of God, to be 'equal to him.' But being made in the 'fashion of a man,'

taking on him our nature, he also submitted unto the form or the state and condition of a servant therein. He had dominion over all, owed service and obedience unto none, being in the 'form of God,' and equal unto him, the condition which Adam aspired unto. But he condescended unto a state of absolute subjection and service for our recovery. This did no more belong unto him on his own account, than it belonged unto Adam to be like unto God, or equal to him. Wherefore it is said that he humbled himself unto it, as Adam would have exalted himself unto a state of dignity which was not his due.

This submission of the Son of God unto an estate of absolute and universal service, is declared by the apostle, Heb. x. 5. For those words of the psalmist, 'Mine ears hast thou digged' or bored, Psal. xl. 6. he renders, 'a body hast thou prepared me.' There is an allusion in the words of the prophecy unto him under the law, who gave up himself in absolute and perpetual service; in sign whereof his ears were bored with an awl. So the body of Christ was prepared for him, that therein he might be in a state of absolute service unto God. So he became to have nothing of his own, the original state that Adam would have forsaken, no not his life, he was obedient unto the death.

This way did divine wisdom find out and contrive, whereby more glory did arise unto the holiness and righteousness of God from his condescension unto universal service and obedience, who was over all God blessed for ever; than dishonour was cast upon them by the self-exaltation of him, who being in all things a servant, designed to be like unto God.

2. Adam was poor in himself as a creature must be. What riches he had in his hand or power, they were none of his own, they were only trusted with him for especial service. In this state of poverty he commits the robbery of attempting to be like unto God. Being poor he would make himself rich by the rapine of an equality with God. This brought on him and us all, as it was meet it should, the loss of all that we were intrusted with. Hereby we lost the image of God, lost our right unto the creatures here below, lost ourselves and our souls. This was the issue of his attempt, to be rich when he was poor.

In this state infinite wisdom hath provided for our relief unto the glory of God. 'For the Lord Jesus Christ being rich in himself, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich;' 2 Cor. 8, 9. He was rich in that riches which Adam designed by robbery. For 'he was in the form of God, and accounted it no robbery to be equal with God.' But he made himself poor for our sakes, with poverty which Adam would have relinquished; yea to that degree that 'he had not where to lay his head,' he had nothing. Hereby he made a compensation for what he never made spoil of, or paid what he never took. In this condescension of his, out of grace and love to mankind, was God more glorified, than he was dishonoured in the sinful exaltation of Adam out of pride and self-love.

3. The sin of man consisted formally in disobedience; and it was the disobedience of him who was every way and in all things obliged unto obedience. For man by all that he was, by all that he had received, by all that he expected or was farther capable of, by the constitution of his own nature, by the nature and authority of God with his relation thereunto, was indispensably obliged unto universal obedience. His sin therefore was the disobedience of him who was absolutely obliged unto obedience by the very constitution of his being and necessary relation unto God. This was that which rendered it so exceeding sinful, and the consequents of it eternally miserable. And from this obligation his sin, in any one instance, was a total renunciation of all obedience unto God.

The recompense with respect unto the glory of God, for disobedience, must be by obedience, as hath been before declared. And if there be not a full obedience yielded unto the law of God in that nature that sinned, man cannot be saved without an eternal violation of the glory of God therein. But the disobedience of him who was every way obliged unto obedience, could not be compensated but by his obedience, who was no way obliged thereunto. And this could be only the obedience of him that is God (for all creatures are obliged to obedience for themselves), and it could be performed only by him who was man. Wherefore, for the accomplishment of this obedience, he who in his own person, as God, was above the law, was in his human nature,

in his own person, a man, made under the law. Had he not been made under the law, what he did could not have been obedience; and had he not been in himself above the law, his obedience could not have been beneficial unto us. The sin of Adam (and the same is in the nature of every sin) consisted in this, that he who was naturally every way under the law, and subject unto it, would be every way above the law, and no way obliged by it. Wherefore it was taken away unto the glory of God, by his obedience, who being in himself above the law, no way subject unto it, yet submitted, humbled himself, to be 'made under the law,' to be every way obliged by it. See Gal. iii. 13. iv. 4. This is the subject of the discourse of the apostle, Rom. v. from ver. 12. to the end of the chapter.

Unto the glory of God, in all these ends the person of Christ, as an effect of infinite wisdom, was meet and able to be a mediator and undertaker between God and man. In the union of both our natures in the same person, he was so meet by his relation unto both; unto God by filiation, or sonship; unto us by brotherhood, or nearness of kindred; Heb. ii. 14. And he was able from the dignity of his person: for the temporary sufferings of him who was eternal, was a full compensation for the eternal sufferings of them who were temporary.

4. God made man the lord of all things here below. He was, as it were, the heir of God, as unto the inheritance of this world in present, and as unto a blessed state in eternal glory. But he lost all right and title hereunto by sin. He made forfeiture of the whole, by the law of the tenure whereby he held it, and God took the forfeiture. Wherefore he designs a new heir of all, and vests the whole inheritance of heaven and earth in him, even in his Son. He 'appointed him the heir of all things;' Heb. i. 3. This translation of God's inheritance the apostle declares, Heb. ii. 6—9. for the words which he cites from Psal. viii. 4—6. 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet;' do declare the original condition of mankind in general. But man forfeited the

dominion and inheritance that he was intrusted withal, and God settleth it anew, solely in the man Christ Jesus. So the apostle adds, 'We see not all things put under him,' but we see it all accomplished in Jesus; ver. 9. But as all other inheritances do descend with theirs, so did this unto him, with its burden. There was a great debt upon it, the debt of sin. This he was to undergo, to make payment of, or satisfaction for, or he could not rightly enter upon the inheritance. This could no otherwise be done but by his suffering in our nature, as hath been declared. He who was the heir of all, was in himself to purge our sins. Herein did the infinite wisdom of God manifest itself, in that he conveyed the inheritance of all things unto him who was meet and able so to enter upon it, so to enjoy and possess it, as that no detriment or damage might arise unto the riches, the revenue, the glory of God, from the waste made by the former possessor.

5. Mankind was to be recovered unto faith and trust in God, as also unto the love of him above all. All these things had utterly forsaken our nature; and the reduction of them into it, is a work of the greatest difficulty. We had so provoked God, he had given such evidences of his wrath and displeasure against us, and our minds thereon were so alienated from him, as we stood in need of the strongest motives, and highest encouragements, once to attempt to return unto him, so as to place all our faith and trust in him, and all our love upon him.

Sinners generally live in a neglect and contempt of God, in an enmity against him; but whenever they are convinced of a necessity to endeavour a return unto him, the first thing they have to conflict withal, is fear. Beginning to understand who and what he is, as also how things stand between him and them, they are afraid to have any thing to do with him, and judge it impossible that they should find acceptance with him. This was the sense that Adam himself had upon his sin, when he was afraid, and hid himself. And the sense of other sinners is frequently expressed unto the same purpose in Scripture. See Isa. xxxiii. 14. Micah vi. 6, 7.

All these discouragements are absolutely provided against in that way of our recovery which infinite wisdom hath found out. It were a thing delightful to dwell on the securities

given us therein, as unto our acceptance in all those principles, acts, and duties wherein the renovation of the image of God doth consist. I must contract my meditations, and shall therefore instance in some few things only unto that purpose.

(1.) Faith is not capable of greater encouragement or confirmation than lieth in this one consideration, that what we are to believe unto this end, is delivered unto us by God himself in our nature. What could confirm our faith and hope in God, what could encourage us to expect acceptance with God, like this ineffable testimony of his good-will unto us? The nature of things is not capable of greater assurance, seeing the divine nature is capable of no greater condescension.

This the Scripture proposeth as that which gives a just expectation that against all fears and oppositions we should close with divine calls and invitations to return unto God. 'Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son,' Matt. xxi. 37. they will believe the message which I send by him. 'He hath spoken unto us by his Son, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;' Heb. i. 1—3. The consideration hereof is sufficient to dispel all that darkness and confusion which fear, dread, and guilt do bring on the minds of men, when they are invited to return unto God. That that God against whom we have sinned, should speak unto us, and treat with us, in our own nature, about a return unto himself, is the utmost that divine excellencies could condescend unto. And as this was needful for us (though proud men and senseless of sin understand it not), so, if it be refused, it will be attended with the sorest destruction; Heb. xii. 25.

(2.) This treaty principally consists in a divine declaration, that all the causes of fear and dread upon the account of sin, are removed and taken away. This is the substance of the gospel, as it is declared by the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 18—21. Wherefore, if hereon we refuse to return unto God, to make him the object of our faith, trust, love, and delight, it is not by reason of any old or former sin, not of that of our original apostacy from God, nor of the effects of it against the law, by the means of a new sin, outdoing them

all in guilt and contempt of God. Such is final unbelief against the proposal of the gospel. It hath more malignity in it than all other sins whatever. But by this way of our recovery, all cause of fear and dread is taken away, all pretences of a distrust of the love and good-will of God are defeated; so that if men will not hereon be recovered unto him, it is from their hatred of him, and enmity unto him, the fruits whereof they must feed on to eternity.

(3.) Whereas, if we will return unto God by faith, we are also to return unto him in love, what greater motive can there be unto it, than that infinite love of the Father and the Son unto us, which is gloriously displayed in this way of our recovery? See 1 John iv. 9, 10. 'Si amare pigebat, saltem redamare ne pigeat.'

(4.) The whole race of mankind falling into sin against God, and apostacy from him, there was no example left unto them to manifest how excellent, how glorious, and comely a thing it is to live unto God, to believe and trust in him, to cleave unto him unchangeably by love. For they were utter strangers unto what is done by angels above, nor could be affected with their example. But without a pattern of these things, manifesting their excellency and reward, they could not earnestly endeavour to attain unto them. This is given us most conspicuously in the human nature of Christ. See Heb. xii. 13. Hereby, therefore, every thing needful for our encouragement to return unto God, is in infinite wisdom provided for, and proposed unto us.

6. Divine wisdom in the way of our recovery by Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, designed to glorify a state of obedience unto God, and to cast the reproach of the most inexpressible folly on the relinquishment of that state by sin. For as God would recover and restore us, so he would do it in a way of obedience on our part, of that obedience which we had forsaken. The design of man which was imposed on him by the craft of Satan, was to become wise like unto God, knowing good and evil. The folly of this endeavour was quickly discovered in its effects. Sense of nakedness, with shame, misery, and death, immediately ensued thereon.

But divine wisdom thought meet to aggravate the reproach of this folly. He would let us see wherein the true

knowledge of good and evil did consist, and how foolishly we had aspired unto it by a relinquishment of that state of obedience wherein we were created.

Job xxviii. from ver. 12. unto the end of the chapter, there is an inquiry after wisdom, and the place of its habitation. All creatures give an account that it is not in them, that it is hid from them, only they have heard the fame thereof. All the context is to evince that it is essentially and originally only in God himself. But if we cannot comprehend it in itself, yet may we not know what is wisdom unto us, and what is required thereunto? Yes, saith he, 'For unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding;' ver. 28. Man, on the other hand, by the suggestion of Satan, thought, and now of himself continues to think, otherwise; namely, that the way to be wise is to relinquish these things. The world will not be persuaded that 'the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.' Yea, there is nothing that the most of men do more despise and scorn, than thoughts that true wisdom doth consist in faith, love, fear, and obedience unto God. See Psal. xiv. 6. Whatever else may be pleaded to be in it, yet sure enough they are, that those who count it wisdom, are but fools.

To cast an everlasting reproach of folly on this contrivance of the devil and man, and uncontrollably to evince wherein alone true wisdom doth consist, God would glorify a state of obedience. He would render it incomparably more amiable, desirable, and excellent, than ever it could have appeared to have been in the obedience of all the angels in heaven, and men on earth, had they continued therein. This he did in this way of our recovery, in that his own eternal Son entered into a state of obedience, and took upon him the 'form,' or condition, 'of a servant' unto God.

What more evident conviction could there be of the folly of mankind in hearkening unto the suggestion of Satan, to seek after wisdom in another condition? How could that great maxim, which is laid down in opposition unto all vain thoughts of man, be more eminently exemplified; that 'the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding?' What greater evidence could be

given, that the nature of man is not capable of a better condition, than that of service and universal obedience unto God? How could any state be represented more amiable, desirable, and blessed? In the obedience of Christ, of the Son of God in our nature, apostate sinners are upbraided with their folly, in relinquishing that state, which by his susception of it, is rendered so glorious. What have we attained, by leaving that condition, which the eternal Son of God delighted in? 'I delight,' saith he, 'to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in the midst of my bowels;' Psal. xl. 8. It is the highest demonstration, that our nature is not capable of more order, more beauty, more glory, than consists in obedience unto God. And that state which we fell into upon our forsaking of it, we now know to be all darkness, confusion, and misery.

Wherefore, seeing God in infinite grace and mercy would recover us unto himself; and in his righteousness and holiness would do this in a way of obedience, of that obedience which we had forsaken; it hath an eminent impression of divine wisdom upon it, that in this mystery of God manifest in the flesh, the only means of our recovery, he would cast the reproach of the most inexpressible folly on our apostacy from a state of it, and render it amiable and desirable unto all who are to return unto him.

To bear the shame of this folly, to be deeply sensible of it, and to live in a constant prospect and view of the glory of obedience in the person of Christ, with a sedulous endeavour for conformity thereunto, is the highest attainment of our wisdom in this world; and whosoever is otherwise minded, is so at his own utmost peril.

7. God in infinite wisdom hath by this means secured the whole inheritance of this life, and that which is to come from a second forfeiture. Whatever God will bestow on the children of men, he grants it unto them in the way of an inheritance. So the land of Canaan, chosen out for a representative of spiritual and eternal things, was granted unto Abraham and his seed for an inheritance. And his interest in the promise is expressed by being 'heir of the world.' All the things of this life that are really good and useful unto us, do belong unto this inheritance. So they did when it was vested in Adam. All things of grace and

glory do so also. And the whole of the privilege of believers is, that they are heirs of salvation. Hence 'godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come;' 1 Tim. iv. 5. And the promise is only of the inheritance. This inheritance, as was before intimated, was lost in Adam, and forfeited into the hand of the great Lord, the great possessor of heaven and earth. In his sovereign grace and goodness he was pleased again to restore it, as unto all the benefits of it unto the former tenants, and that with an addition of grace, and a more exceeding weight of glory. But withal, infinite wisdom provides that a second forfeiture shall not be made of it. Wherefore, the grant of it is not made immediately unto any of those for whose use and benefit it is prepared and granted. They had been once tried and failed in their trust unto their own eternal beggary and ruin, had not infinite grace interposed for their relief. And it did not become the wisdom and glory of God to make a second grant of it which might be frustrate in like manner. Wherefore he would not commit it again unto any mere creature whatever; nor could it safely have been so done with security unto his glory. For,

(1.) It was too great a trust, even the whole inheritance of heaven and earth, all the riches of grace and glory, to be committed unto any one of them. God would not give this glory unto any one creature. If it be said, it was first committed unto Adam, and therefore to have it again, is not an honour above the capacity of a creature; I say, that the nature of the inheritance is greatly changed. The whole of what was intrusted with Adam, comes exceedingly short of what God hath now prepared as the inheritance of the church. There is grace in it, and glory added unto it, which Adam neither had, nor could have right unto. It is now of that nature, as could neither be intrusted with, nor communicated by, any mere creature. Besides, he that hath it is the object of the faith and trust of the church, nor can any be interested in any part of this inheritance, without the exercise of those and all other graces on him, whose the inheritance is. And so to be the object of our faith, is the prerogative of the divine nature alone.

(2.) No mere creature could secure this inheritance that it should be lost no more; and yet if it were so, it would

be highly derogatory unto the glory of God. For two things were required hereunto. [1.] That he in whom this trust is vested, should be in himself incapable of any such failure, as through which, by the immutable eternal law of obedience unto God, a forfeiture of it should be made. [2.] That he undertake for them all who shall be heirs of salvation, who shall enjoy this inheritance, that none of them should lose or forfeit their own personal interest in it, or the terms whereon it is conveyed and communicated unto them. But no mere creature was sufficient unto these ends. For no one of them in and by himself, in the constitution of his nature, is absolutely free from falling from God, himself. They may receive, the angels in heaven, and the glorified saints have received, such a confirmation in and by grace, as that they shall never actually apostatize or fall from God. But this they have not from themselves, nor the principles of their own nature, which is necessary unto him that shall receive this trust. For so when it was first vested in Adam, he was left to preserve it by the innate concreated abilities of his own nature. And as unto the latter, all the angels in heaven cannot undertake to secure the obedience of any one man, so as that the conveyance of the inheritance may be sure unto him. Wherefore with respect hereunto, those angels themselves, though the most holy and glorious of all the creatures of God, have no greater trust or interest, than to 'be ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;' Heb. i. 14. So unmeet are they to have the whole inheritance vested in any of them.

But all this infinite wisdom hath provided for in the great 'mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.' God herein makes his only Son the heir of all things, and vests the whole inheritance absolutely in him. For the promise, which is the court-roll of heaven, the only external mean and record of its conveyance, was originally made unto Christ only. God 'said not, And unto thy seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which seed is Christ;' Gal. iii. 16. And we become again heirs of God, only as we are joint heirs with Christ; Rom. viii. 17. that is, by being taken into a participation of that inheritance which is vested in him alone. For many may be partakers of the benefit of

that, whose right and title is in one alone, when it is conveyed unto him for their use. And hereby the ends beforementioned are fully provided for. For,

(1.) He who is thus made the heir of all is meet to be intrusted with the glory of it. For where this grant is solemnly expressed, it is declared that he is the 'brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;' Heb. i. 2, 3. and that by him the worlds were made. He alone was meet to be this heir, who is partaker of the divine nature, and by whom all things were created. For such things belong unto it, as cannot appertain unto any other. The reader may consult, if he please, our exposition of that place of the apostle.

(2.) Any failure in his own person was absolutely impossible. The subsistence of the human nature in the person of the Son of God, rendered the least sin utterly impossible unto him. For all the moral operations of that nature are the acts of the person of the Son of God. And hereby not only is the inheritance secured, but also an assurance that it is so, is given unto all them that do believe. This is the life and soul of all gospel comforts, that the whole inheritance of grace and glory is vested in Christ, where it can never suffer loss or damage. When we are sensible of the want of grace, should we go unto God, and say, 'Father, give us the portion of goods that falls unto us,' as the prodigal did, we should quickly consume it, and bring ourselves unto the utmost misery as he did also. But in Christ the whole inheritance is secured for evermore.

(3.) He is able to preserve all those who shall be heirs of this inheritance, that they forfeit not their own personal interest therein, according unto the terms of the covenant, whereby it is made over to them. He can and will, by the power of his grace, preserve them all unto the full enjoyment of the purchased inheritance. We hold our title by the rod, at the will of the Lord. And many failures we are liable unto whereon we are 'in misericordia domini,' and are subject unto amercements. But yet the whole inheritance being granted unto Christ, is eternally secured for us, and we are by his grace preserved from such offences against the supreme Lord, or committing any such wastes, as should cast us out of our possession. See Psal. lxxxix. 27—32.

Thus in all things infinite wisdom hath provided, that no second forfeiture should be made of the inheritance of grace and glory, which as it would have been eternally ruinous unto mankind, so it was inconsistent with the glory and honour of God.

8. The wisdom of God was gloriously exalted in the righteous destruction of Satan and his interest, by the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God. He had prevailed against the first way of the manifestation of divine glory; and therein both pleased and prided himself. Nothing could ever give such satisfaction unto the malicious murderer, as the breach he had occasioned between God and man, with his hopes and apprehensions that it would be eternal. He had no other thoughts, but that the whole race of mankind which God had designed unto the enjoyment of himself, should be everlastingly ruined. So he had satisfied his envy against man in his eternal destruction with himself, and his malice against God in depriving him of his glory. Hereon, upon the distance that he had made between God and man, he interposed himself, and boasted himself for a long season, as 'the God of this world,' who had all power over it and in it. It belonged unto the honour of the wisdom of God, that he should be defeated in this triumph. Neither was it meet that this should be done by a mere act of sovereign omnipotent power. For he would yet glory in his craft and the success of it, that there was no way to disappoint him, but by crushing him with power, without respect unto righteousness, or demonstration of wisdom. Wherefore it must be done in such a way, as wherein he might see unto his eternal shame and confusion, all his arts and subtleties defeated by infinite wisdom, and his enterprise overthrown in a way of right and equity. The remark that the Holy Ghost puts on the serpent which was his instrument in drawing man unto apostacy from God, namely, that he was 'subtle above all the beasts of the field,' is only to intimate wherein Satan designed his attempt, and from whence he hoped for his success. It was not an act of power or rage, but of craft, counsel, subtlety and deceit. Herein he gloried and prided himself; wherefore the way to disappoint him with shame, must be a contrivance of infinite wisdom, turning all his artifices into mere folly.

This work of God, with respect unto him, is expressed in the Scripture two ways; first, it is called the spoiling of him, as unto his power, and the prey that he had taken. The strong man armed was to be bound, and his goods spoiled. The Lord Christ, by his death, 'destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' He 'led captivity captive,' spoiling principalities and powers, triumphing over them in his cross. So Abraham, when he smote the kings, not only delivered Lot who was their captive, but also took all their spoils. Again, it is expressed by the destruction of his works. 'For this cause was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' The spoils which he had in his own power were taken from him, and the works which he had erected in the minds of men were demolished. The web which he had wove to clothe himself withal, as the God of this world, was unravelled to the last thread. And although all this seems to represent a work of power, yet was it indeed an effect of wisdom and righteousness principally.

For the power which Satan had over mankind was in itself unjust. For (1.) he obtained it by fraud and deceit. 'The serpent beguiled Eve.' (2.) He possessed it with injustice, with respect unto God, being an invader of his right and possession. (3.) He used and exercised it with malice, tyranny, and rage; so as that it was every way unjust both in its foundation and execution. With respect hereunto he was justly destroyed by omnipotent power, which puts forth itself in his eternal punishment. But on the other side, mankind did suffer justly under his power, being given up unto it in the righteous judgment of God. For one may suffer justly what another doth unjustly inflict. As when one causelessly strikes an innocent man, if he strikes him again, he who did the first injury suffereth justly, but the other doth unjustly in revenging himself. Wherefore, as man was given up unto him in a way of punishment, he was a lawful captive, and was not to be delivered but in a way of justice. And this was done in a way that Satan never thought of. For by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God incarnate, there was full satisfaction made unto the justice of God for the sins of man, a reparation of his glory, and an exaltation of the honour of his holiness, with all the

other properties of his nature, as also of his law, outbalancing all the diminution of it by the first apostacy of mankind, as hath been declared. Immediately hereon all the charms of Satan were dissolved, all his chains loosed, his darkness that he had brought on the creation dispelled, his whole plot and design defeated; whereon he saw himself, and was exposed unto all the holy angels of heaven, in all the counsels, craft, and power he had boasted of, to be nothing but a congeries, a mass of darkness, malice, folly, impotency, and rage.

Hereon did Satan make an entrance into one of the principal parts of his eternal torments, in that furious self-maceration which he is given up unto on the consideration of his defeat and disappointment. Absolute power he always feared, and what it would produce; for he believes that, and trembles. But against any other way he thought he had secured himself. It lieth plain to every understanding, what shame, confusion, and self-revenge, the proud apostate was cast into upon his holy, righteous disappointment of his design; whereas he had always promised himself to carry his cause, or at least to put God to act in the destruction of his dominion, by mere omnipotent power, without regard unto any other properties of his nature. To find that which he contrived for the destruction of the glory of God, the disappointment of his ends in the creation of all things, and the eternal ruin of mankind, to issue in a more glorious exaltation of the holy properties of the divine nature, and an unspeakable augmentation of blessedness unto mankind itself, is the highest aggravation of his eternal torments. This was a work every way becoming the infinite wisdom of God.

9. Whereas there are three distinct persons in the holy Trinity, it became the wisdom of God, that the Son, the second person, should undertake this work, and be incarnate. I shall but sparingly touch on this glorious mystery; for as unto the reason of it, it is absolutely resolved into the infinite wisdom and sovereign counsel of the divine will. And all such things are the objects of a holy admiration, not curiously to be inquired into. To intrude ourselves into the things which we have not seen, that is, which are not revealed in those concernments of them which are not re-

vealed, is not unto the advantage of faith in our edification. But as unto what is declared of them, either immediately and directly, or by their relation unto other known truths, we may meditate on them unto the improvement of faith and love towards God. And some things are thus evident unto us in this mystery.

(1.) We had by sin lost the image of God, and thereby all gracious acceptance with him, all interest in his love and favour. In our recovery, as we have declared, this image is again to be restored unto us, or we are to be renewed into the likeness of God. And there was a condecency unto divine wisdom, that this work should in a peculiar manner be effected by him who is the essential image of God, that is, the Father. This, as we have formerly shewed, was the person of the Son. Receiving his personal subsistence, and therewithal the divine nature, with all its essential properties from the Father by eternal generation, he was thereon the express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory. Whatever is in the person of the Father, is in the person of the Son, and being all received from the Father, he is his essential image. And one end of his incarnation was that he might be the representative image of God unto us. Whereas therefore in the work of our recovery, the image of God should be restored in us, there was a condecency that it should be done by him who was the essential image of God. For it consists in the communication of the effects and likeness of the same image unto us, which was essentially in himself.

(2.) We were by nature the sons of God. We stood in relation of sons unto him by virtue of our creation, the communication of his image and likeness, with the preparation of an inheritance for us. On the same accounts the angels are frequently called the sons of God. This title, this relation unto God, we utterly lost by sin, becoming aliens from him, and enemies unto him. Without a recovery into this estate we cannot be restored, nor brought unto the enjoyment of God. And this cannot be done but by adoption. Now it seems convenient unto divine wisdom, that he should recover our sonship by adoption, who was himself the essential and eternal Son of God.

(3.) The sum of what we can comprehend in this great

mystery ariseth from the consideration of the order of the holy persons of the blessed Trinity in their operations. For their order herein doth follow that of their subsistence. Unto this great work there are peculiarly required, authority, love, and power, all directed by infinite wisdom. These originally reside in the person of the Father, and the acting of them in this matter is constantly ascribed unto him. He sent the Son, as he gives the Spirit, by an act of sovereign authority. And he sent the Son from his eternal love; he loved the world, and sent his Son to die. This is constantly assigned to be the effect of the love and grace of the Father. And he wrought in Christ, and he works in us, with respect unto the end of this mystery, with the 'exceeding greatness of his power;' Eph. i. 18. The Son, who is the second person in the order of subsistence, in the order of operation puts the whole authority, love, and power of the Father in execution. This order of subsistence and operation thereon, is expressly declared by the apostle, 1 Cor. viii. 6. 'Unto us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him.' The Father is the original fountain and spring, ἐξ οὗ, from whom, whose original authority, love, goodness and power, are all these things. That expression of 'from him,' peculiarly denotes the eternal original of all things. But how are this authority, goodness, love, and power in the Father, whence all these things spring and arise, made effectual, how are their effects wrought out and accomplished? 'There is one Lord, even Jesus Christ,' a distinct person from the Father, δι' οὗ, 'by whom are all things.' He works in the order of his subsistence, to execute, work, and accomplish all that originally proceedeth from the Father. By the Holy Spirit, who is the third person in order of subsistence, there is made a perfecting application of the whole unto all its proper ends.

Wherefore this work of our redemption and recovery, being the especial effect of the authority, love, and power of the Father, it was to be executed in and by the person of the Son; as the application of it unto us is made by the Holy Ghost. Hence it became not the person of the Father to assume our nature; it belonged not thereunto in the order of subsistence and operation in the blessed Trinity.

The authority, love, and power whence the whole work proceeded, were his in a peculiar manner. But the execution of what infinite wisdom designed in them and by them, belonged unto another. Nor did this belong unto the person of the Holy Spirit, who in order of divine operation following that of his subsistence, was to perfect the whole work, in making application of it unto the church when it was wrought. Wherefore it was every way suited unto divine wisdom, unto the order of the holy persons in their subsistence and operation, that this work should be undertaken and accomplished in the person of the Son. What is farther must be referred unto another world.

These are some few of those things wherein the infinite wisdom of God in this holy contrivance giveth forth some rays of itself into enlightened minds, and truly humbled souls. But how little a portion of it is heard by us? How weak, how low are our conceptions about it? We cannot herein find out the Almighty unto perfection. No small part of the glory of heaven will consist in that comprehension which we shall have of the mystery of the wisdom, love, and grace of God herein.

Howbeit we are with all diligence to inquire into it whilst we are here in the way. It is the very centre of all glorious evangelical truths; not one of them can be understood, believed, or improved as they ought, without a due comprehension of their relation hereunto; as we have shewed before.

This is that which the prophets of old inquired into and after with all diligence, even the mystery of God manifest in the flesh, with the glory that ensued thereon; 1 Pet. i. 11. Yet had they not that light to discern it by, which we have. The 'least in the kingdom of God,' as to the knowledge of this mystery may be above the greatest of them. And ought we not to fear lest our sloth under the beams of the sun should be condemned by their diligence in the twilight?

This the angels bow down to look into, although their concerns therein were not equal to ours. But angels are angels, and prophets were prophets; we are a generation of poor sinful men who are little concerned in the glory of God or our own duty.

Is it not much to be lamented that many Christians content themselves with a very superficiary knowledge of these things? How are the studies, the abilities, the time, and diligence of many excellent persons engaged in, and laid out about, the works of nature, and the effects of divine wisdom and power in them, by whom any endeavour to inquire into this glorious mystery is neglected, if not despised? Alas, the light of divine wisdom in the greatest works of nature, holds not the proportion of the meanest star unto the sun in its full strength, unto that glory of it which shines in this mystery of God manifest in the flesh, and the work accomplished thereby. A little time shall put an end unto the whole subject of their inquiries, with all the concernment of God and man in them for evermore. This alone is that which fills up eternity, and which although it be now with some a nothing, yet will shortly be all.

Is it not much more to be lamented, that many who are called Christians do even despise these mysteries? Some oppose them directly with pernicious heresies about the person of Christ, denying his divine nature, or the personal union of his two natures, whereby the whole mystery of infinite wisdom is evacuated and rejected. And some there are who though they do not deny the truth of this mystery, yet they both despise and reproach such as with any diligence endeavour to inquire into it. I shall add the words used on a like occasion, unto them who sincerely believe the mysteries of the gospel. 'But ye beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.' And the due contemplation of this mystery will certainly be attended with many spiritual advantages.

[1.] It will bring in steadfastness in believing as unto the especial concerns of our own souls; so as to give unto God the glory that is his due thereon. This is the work, these are the ends of faith; Rom. v. 1—5. We see how many Christians who are sincere believers, yet fluctuate in their minds with great uncertainties as unto their own state and condition. The principal reason of it, is because they are unskilful in the word of righteousness, and so are babes in a weak condition, as the apostle speaks; Heb. v. 13.

This is the way of spiritual peace. When the soul of a believer is able to take a view of the glory of the wisdom of God, exalting all the other holy properties of his nature in this great mystery unto our salvation, it will obviate all fears, remove all objections, and be a means of bringing in assured peace into the mind; which without a due comprehension of it, will never be attained.

[2.] The acting of faith hereon, is that which is accompanied with its great power to change and transform the soul into the image and likeness of Christ. So is it expressed by the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' We all beholding; κατοπτριζόμενοι, not taking a transient glance of these things, but diligently inspecting them, as those do who through a glass design a steady view of things at a distance. That which we are thus to behold by the continued actings of faith in holy contemplation, is the 'glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ,' as it expressed, chap. iv. 6. which is nothing but that mystery of godliness, in whose explanation we have been engaged. And what is the effect of the steady contemplation of this mystery by faith? μεταμορφούμεθα, 'we are changed,' made quite other creatures than we were, cast into the form, figure, and image of Jesus Christ, the great design of all believers in this world. Would we then be like unto Christ? Would we bear the image of the heavenly, as we have borne the image of the earthy? Is nothing so detestable unto us as the deformed image of the old man, in the lusts of the mind and of the flesh? Is nothing so amiable and desirable as the image of Christ and the representation of God in him? this is the way, this is the means of attaining the end which we aim at.

[3.] Abounding in this duty is the most effectual means of freeing us in particular from the shame and bane of profession in earthly mindedness. There is nothing so unbecoming a Christian, as to have his mind always exercised about, always filled with, thoughts of earthly things. And according as men's thoughts are exercised about them, their affections are increased and inflamed towards them. These things mutually promote one another, and there is a kind of

circulation in them. Multiplied thoughts inflame affections, and inflamed affections increase the number of thoughts concerning them. Nothing is more repugnant unto the whole life of faith, nothing more obstructive unto the exercise of all grace, than a prevalency of this frame of mind. And at this season in an especial manner it is visibly preying on the vitals of religion. To abound in the contemplation of this mystery, and in the exercise of faith about it, as it is diametrically opposed unto this frame, so it will gradually cast it out of the soul. And without this we shall labour in the fire for deliverance from this pernicious evil.

[4.] And hereby are we prepared for the enjoyment of glory above. No small part of that glory consists in the eternal contemplation and adoration of the wisdom, goodness, love, and power of God in this mystery, and the effects of it, as shall afterward be declared.

And how can we better or otherwise be prepared for it, but by the implanting a sense of it on our minds by sedulous contemplation whilst we are in this world? God will not take us into heaven, into the vision and possession of heavenly glory, with our heads and hearts reeking with the thoughts and affections of earthly things. He hath appointed means to make us 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,' before he will bring us into the enjoyment of it. And this is the principal way whereby he doth it. For hereby it is that we are 'changed into the image of Christ from glory to glory,' and make the nearest approaches unto the eternal fulness of it.

CHAP. XVIII.

The nature of the person of Christ, and the hypostatical union of his natures declared.

THE nature or constitution of the person of Christ hath been commonly spoken unto, and treated of, in the writings both of the ancient and modern divines. It is not my purpose in this discourse to handle any thing that hath been so fully

already declared by others. Howbeit to speak something of it in this place, is necessary unto the present work; and I shall do it in answer unto a double end or design.

First, To help those that believe, in the regulation of their thoughts about this divine person, so far as the Scripture goeth before us. It is of great importance unto our souls, that we have right conceptions concerning him; not only in general, and in opposition unto the pernicious heresies of them by whom his divine person, or either of his natures are denied; but also in those especial instances wherein it is the most ineffable effect of divine wisdom and grace. For although the knowledge of him mentioned in the gospel, be not confined merely unto his person in the constitution thereof, but extends itself unto the whole work of his mediation, with the design of God's love and grace therein, with our own duty thereon; yet is this knowledge of his person the foundation of all the rest, wherein, if we mistake or fail, our whole building in the other parts of the knowledge of him will fall unto the ground. And although the saving knowledge of him is not to be obtained without especial divine revelation, Matt. xvi. 17. or saving illumination, 1 John v. 20. nor can we know him perfectly, until we come where he is to behold his glory; 1 John xvii. 24. yet are instructions from the Scripture of use to lead us into those farther degrees of the knowledge of him which are attainable in this life.

Secondly, To manifest in particular how ineffably distinct the relation between the Son of God and the man Christ Jesus, is from all that relation and union which may be between God and believers, or between God and any other creature. The want of a true understanding hereof, is the fundamental error of many in our days. We shall manifest thereupon how 'it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,' so that in all things 'he might have the pre-eminence;' Col. i. 18, 19. And I shall herein wholly avoid the curious inquiries, bold conjectures, and unwarrantable determinations of the schoolmen and some others. For many of them designing to explicate this mystery, by exceeding the bounds of Scripture light and sacred sobriety, have obscured it. Endeavouring to render all things plain unto reason, they have expressed many things unsound as

unto faith, and fallen into manifold contradictions among themselves. Hence Aquinas affirms, that three of the ways of declaring the hypostatical union which are proposed by the master of the sentences, are so far from probable opinions, as that they are downright heresies. I shall therefore confine myself in the explication of this mystery unto the propositions of divine revelation, with the just and necessary expositions of them.

What the Scripture represents of the wisdom of God in this great work, may be reduced unto these four heads.

1. The assumption of our nature into personal subsistence with the Son of God.

2. The union of the two natures in that single person which is consequential thereon.

3. The mutual communication of those distinct natures, the divine and human, by virtue of that union.

4. The enunciations or predications concerning the person of Christ, which follow on that union and communion.

1. The first thing in the divine constitution of the person of Christ as God and man, is assumption. That ineffable divine act I intend, whereby the person of the Son of God assumed our nature, or took it into a personal subsistence with himself. This the Scripture expresseth sometimes actively with respect unto the divine nature acting in the person of the Son, the nature assuming; sometimes passively with respect unto the human nature, the nature assumed. The first it doth, Heb. ii. 14. 16. 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.' Phil. ii. 6, 7. 'Being in the form of God, he took on him the form of a servant;' and in sundry other places. The assumption, the taking of our human nature to be his own, by an ineffable act of his power and grace, is clearly expressed. And to take it to be his own, his own nature, can be no otherwise but by giving it a subsistence in his own person; otherwise his own nature it is not, nor can be. Hence God is said to 'purchase his church with his own blood,' Acts xx. 28. That relation and denomination of 'his own,' is from the single person of him whose it is. The latter is declared, John i. 14. 'The Word

was made flesh.' Rom. viii. 3. 'God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.' Gal. iv. 4. 'Made of a woman, made under the law.' Rom. i. 3. 'Made of the seed of David according to the flesh.' The eternal Word, the Son of God, was not made flesh, not made of a woman, nor of the seed of David, by the conversion of his substance or nature into flesh, which implies a contradiction, and besides is absolutely destructive of the divine nature. He could no otherwise, therefore, be made flesh, or made of a woman, but in that our nature was made his, by his assuming of it to be his own. The same person who before was not flesh, was not man, was made flesh as man, in that he took our human nature to be his own.

(1.) This ineffable act, is the foundation of the divine relation between the Son of God and the man Christ Jesus. We can only adore the mysterious nature of it; 'great is this mystery of godliness.' Yet may we observe sundry things to direct us in that duty.

[1.] As unto original efficiency, it was the act of the divine nature, and so consequently of the Father, Son, and Spirit. For so are all outward acts of God, the divine nature being the immediate principle of all such operations. The wisdom, power, grace, and goodness exerted therein, are essential properties of the divine nature. Wherefore, the acting of them originally belongs equally unto each person, equally participant of that nature.

[2.] As unto authoritative designation, it was the act of the Father. Hence is he said to 'send his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,' Rom. viii. 3. Gal. iv. 4.

[3.] As unto the formation of the human nature, it was the peculiar act of the Spirit; Luke i. 35.

[4.] As unto the term of the assumption, or the taking of our nature unto himself, it was the peculiar act of the person of the Son. Herein, as Damascen observes, the other persons had no concurrence, but only κατὰ βούλησιν καὶ εὐδοκίαν, 'by counsel and approbation.'

(2.) This assumption was the only immediate act of the divine nature on the human in the person of the Son. All those that follow in subsistence, sustentation, with all others that are communicative, do ensue thereon.

(3.) This assumption and the hypostatical union are dis-

tinct and different in the formal reason of them. [1.] Assumption is the immediate act of the divine nature in the person of the Son on the human; union is mediate by virtue of that assumption. [2.] Assumption is unto personality; it is that act whereby the Son of God and our nature became one person. Union is an act or relation of the natures subsisting in that one person. [3.] Assumption respects the acting of the divine, and the passion of the human nature, the one assumeth, the other is assumed. Union respects the mutual relation of the natures unto each other. Hence the divine nature may be said to be united unto the human, as well as the human unto the divine; but the divine nature cannot be said to be assumed as the human is. Wherefore, assumption denotes the acting of the one nature, and the passion of the other, union the mutual relation that is between them both.

These things may be safely affirmed, and ought to be firmly believed, as the sense of the Holy Ghost in those expressions, 'He took on him the seed of Abraham; he took on him the form of a servant;' and the like. And who can conceive the condescension of divine goodness, or the actings of divine wisdom and power therein!

2. That which followeth hereon, is the union of the two natures in the same person, or the hypostatical union. This is included and asserted in a multitude of divine testimonies; Isa. vii. 14. 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,' as Matt. i. 23. He who was conceived and born of the virgin was Immanuel, or God with us; that is, God manifest in the flesh, by the union of his natures in the same person. Isa. ix. 6. 'To us a child is born, to us a son is given: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.' That the same person should be the 'mighty God,' and a 'child born,' is neither conceivable nor possible, nor can be true, but by the union of the divine and human natures in the same person. So he said of himself, 'Before Abraham was, I am;' John viii. 58. That he, the same person who then spake unto the Jews, and as a man was little more than thirty years of age, should also be before Abraham, undeniably confirms the union of another nature in the same person with that wherein he spoke those

words, and without which they could not be true. He had not only another nature which did exist before Abraham, but the same individual person who then spoke in the human nature, did then exist. See to the same purpose, John i. 14. Acts xx. 28. Rom. ix. 5. Col. ii. 9. 1 John iii. 16.

This union the ancient church affirmed to be made ἀτρεπτῶς, 'without any change' in the person of the Son of God, which the divine nature is not subject unto; ἀδιαφόρτως, with a distinction of natures, but 'without any division' of them by separate subsistences; ἀσυγχύτως, 'without mixture' or confusion; ἀχωρίστως, 'without separation' or distance. And οὐσιωδῶς, 'substantially,' because it was of two substances or essences, in the same person, in opposition unto all accidental union, as the 'fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily.'

These expressions were found out and used by the ancient church, to prevent the fraud of those who corrupted the doctrine of the person of Christ, and (as all of that sort ever did, and yet continue so to do) obscured their pernicious sentiments under ambiguous expressions. And they also made use of sundry terms which they judged significant of this great mystery, or the incarnation of the Son of God. Such are ἐνσάρκωσις, 'incarnation;' ἐνσωμάτωσις, 'embodying;' ἐνάνθρωπησις, 'inhumanation;' ἡ δεσποτικὴ ἐπιδημία, καὶ παρουσία, ἡ οἰκονομία, to the same purpose; ἡ διὰ σαρκὸς ὁμιλία, 'his conversation, in or by the flesh;' ἡ διὰ ἀνθρωπότητος φανέρωσις, 'his manifestation by humanity;' ἡ ἔλευσις, 'the advent;' ἡ κένωσις, 'the exinanition,' or humiliation; ἡ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιφάνεια, 'the appearance' or manifestation 'of Christ;' ἡ συνκατάβασις, 'the condescension.' Most of these expressions are taken from the Scripture, and are used therein with respect unto this mystery, or some concernments of it. Wherefore, as our faith is not confined unto any one of these words or terms, so as that we should be obliged to believe not only the things intended, but also the manner of its expression in them, so, so far as they explain the thing intended according unto the mind of the Holy Ghost in the Scripture, and obviate the senses of men of corrupt minds, they are to be embraced and defended as useful helps in teaching the truth.

That whereby it is most usually declared in the writings

of the ancients, is χάρις ἑνώσεως, 'gratia unionis,' the 'grace of union;' which form of words some manifesting themselves strangers unto, do declare how little conversant they are in their writings. Now, it is not any habitual inherent grace residing subjectively in the person, or human nature of Christ, that is intended, but things of another nature.

(1.) The cause of this union is expressed in it. This is the free grace and favour of God towards the man Christ Jesus, predestinating, designing, and taking him into actual union with the person of the Son, without respect unto, or foresight of, any precedent dignity or merit in him; 1 Pet. i. 20.

Hence is that of Austin, 'Ea gratia fit ab initio fidei suæ homo quicunque Christianus, qua gratia homo ille ab initio factus est Christus.' De Prædest. Sanct. cap. 15. For whereas all the inherent grace of the human nature of Christ, and all the holy obedience which proceeded from it, was consequent in order of nature unto this union, and an effect of it, they could in no sense be the meritorious or procuring causes of it; it was of grace.

(2.) It is used also by many and designed to express the peculiar dignity of the human nature of Christ. This is that wherein no creature is participant, nor ever shall be unto eternity. This is the fundamental privilege of the human nature of Christ, which all others, even unto his eternal glory, proceed from, and are resolved into.

(3.) The glorious meetness and ability of the person of Christ, for and unto all the acts and duties of his mediatory office. For they are all resolved into the union of his natures in the same person, without which not one of them could be performed unto the benefit of the church. And this is that 'grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' which renders him so glorious and amiable unto believers. 'Unto them that believe he is precious.'

The common prevalent expression of it at present in the church is the hypostatical union; that is, the union of the divine and human nature in the person of the Son of God, the human nature having no personality nor subsistence of its own.

With respect unto this union, the name of Christ is called 'Wonderful,' as that which hath the pre-eminence in all the effects of divine wisdom. And it is a singular effect

thereof. There is no other union in things divine or human, in things spiritual or natural, whether substantial or accidental, that is of the same kind with it, it differs specifically from them all.

[1.] The most glorious union is that of the divine persons in the same being or nature; the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, the Holy Spirit in them both, and both in him. But this is a union of distinct persons in the unity of the same single nature. And this, I confess, is more glorious than that whereof we treat; for it is in God absolutely, it is eternal, of his nature and being. But this union we speak of, is not God, it is a creature, an effect of divine wisdom and power. And it is different from it herein, inasmuch as that is of many distinct persons in the same nature, this is, of distinct natures in the same person. That union is natural, substantial, essential, in the same nature; this, as it is not accidental, as we shall shew, so it is not properly substantial, because it is not of the same nature, but of divers in the same person, remaining distinct in their essence and substance, and is therefore peculiarly hypostatical or personal. Hence Austin feared not to say, that 'Homo potius est in filio Dei, quam filius in Patre;' De Trin. lib. i. cap. 10. But that is true only in this one respect, that the Son is not so in the Father as to become one person with him. In all other respects it must be granted, that the in-being of the Son in the Father, the union between them, which is natural, essential, and eternal, doth exceed this in glory, which was a temporary, external act of divine wisdom and grace.

[2.] The most eminent substantial union in things natural, is that of the soul and body constituting an individual person. There is, I confess, some kind of similitude between this union and that of the different natures in the person of Christ; but it is not of the same kind or nature. And the dissimilitudes that are between them, are more and of greater importance than those things are wherein there seems to be an agreement between them. For,

1st, The soul and body are so united, as to constitute one entire nature. The soul is not human nature, nor is the body, but it is the consequent of their union. Soul and body are essential parts of human nature, but complete hu-

man nature they are not but by virtue of their union. But the union of the natures in the person of Christ, doth not constitute a new nature that either was not, or was not complete before. Each nature remains the same perfect, complete nature after this union.

2dly, The union of the soul and body doth constitute that nature which is made essentially complete thereby, a new individual person, with a subsistence of its own, which neither of them was, nor had before that union. But although the person of Christ, as God and man, be constituted by this union, yet his person absolutely, and his individual subsistence, was perfect, absolutely antecedent unto that union. He did not become a new person, another person than he was before, by virtue of that union; only that person assumed human nature to itself to be its own, into personal subsistence.

3dly, Soul and body are united by an external efficient cause, or the power of God; and not by the act of one of them upon another. But this union is effected by that act of the divine nature towards the human, which we have before described.

4thly, Neither soul nor body have any personal subsistence before their union; but the sole foundation of this union was in this, that the Son of God was a self-subsisting person from eternity.

[3.] There are other unions in things natural which are by mixture of composition. Hereon something is produced composed of various parts, which is not what any of them are. And there is a conversion of things, when one thing is substantially changed into another, as the water in the miracle that Christ wrought was turned into wine. But this union hath no resemblance unto any of them. There is not a κρᾶσις, 'a mixture,' a contemporation of the divine and human natures into one third nature, or the conversion of one into another. Such notions of these things some fancied of old. Eutyches supposed such a composition and mixture of the two natures in the person of Christ, as that the human nature at least should lose all its essential properties, and have neither understanding nor will of its own. And some of the Arians fancied a substantial change of that created divine nature which they acknowledged, into the

human. But these imaginations, instead of professing Christ to be God and man, would leave him indeed neither God nor man; and have been sufficiently confuted. Wherefore the union we treat of hath no similitude unto any such natural union as is the effect of composition or mutation.

[4.] There is an artificial union wherewith some have illustrated this mystery; as that of fire and iron in the same sword. The sword is one; the nature of fire and that of iron different; and the acts of them distinct; the iron cuts, the fire burns; and the effects distinct; cutting and burning; yet is the agent or instrument but one sword. Something of this nature may be allowed to be spoken in way of allusion; but it is a weak and imperfect representation of this mystery on many accounts. For the heat in iron is rather an accident than a substance, is separable from it; and in sundry other things diverts the mind from due apprehensions of this mystery.

[5.] There is a spiritual union, namely, of Christ and believers; or of God in Christ and believers, which is excellent and mysterious, such as all other unions in nature are made use of in the Scripture to illustrate and represent. This some among us do judge to be of the same kind with that of the Son of God and the man Christ Jesus. Only they say they differ in degrees. The eternal Word was so united unto the man Christ Jesus, as that thereby he was exalted inconceivably above all other men, though never so holy; and had greater communications from God than any of them. Wherefore he was on many accounts the Son of God in a peculiar manner, and by a communication of names is called God also. This being the opinion of Nestorius, revived again in the days wherein we live, I shall declare wherein he placed the conjunction or union of the two natures of Christ, whereby he constituted two distinct persons of the Son of God, and the Son of man, as these now do, and briefly detect the vanity of it. For the whole of it consisted in the concession of sundry things that were true in particular, making use of the pretence of them, unto the denial of that wherein alone the true union of the person of Christ did consist.

Nestorius allowed the presence of the Son of God, with the man Christ Jesus, to consist in five things.

1st. He said he was so present with him, κατὰ παράστασιν, or by inhabitation, as man dwells in a house or a ship to rule it. He dwelt in him as his temple. So he dwells in all that believe, but in him in a more especial manner. And this is true with respect unto that fulness of the Spirit whereby God was with him and in him; as he is with and in all believers, according unto the measures wherein they are made partakers of him. But this answers not that divine testimony, that 'in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;' Col. ii. 9. The fulness of the Godhead is the entire divine nature. This nature is considered in the person of the Son, or eternal Word, for it was the Word that was made flesh. And this could no otherwise dwell in him bodily, really, substantially, but in the assumption of that nature to be his own. And no sense can be given unto this assertion to preserve it from blasphemy; that the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in any of the saints bodily.

2dly. He allowed an especial presence, κατὰ σχέσιν, as some call it, that is, by such a union of affections as is between intimate friends. The soul of God rested always in that man; in him was he well pleased, and he was wholly given up in his affections unto God. This also is true; but there is that which is no less true that renders it useless unto the pretensions of Nestorius. For he allowed the divine person of the Son of God; but whatever is spoken of this nature concerning the love of God unto the man Christ Jesus, and of his love to God, it is the person of the Father that is intended therein; nor can any one instance be given where it is capable of another interpretation. For it is still spoken of with reference unto the work that he was sent of the Father to accomplish, and his own delight therein.

3dly. He allowed it to be κατ' ἀξίαν, by way of dignity and honour. For this conjunction is such, as that whatever honour is given unto the Son of God, is also to be given unto that Son of man. But herein to recompense his sacriledge in taking away the hypostatical union from the church, he would introduce idolatry into it. For the honour that is due unto the Son of God is divine, religious, or the owning of all essential divine properties in him, with a due subjection of soul unto him thereon. But to give this honour unto the man Christ Jesus, without a supposition of the sub-

sistence of his human nature in the person of the Son of God, and solely on that account, is highly idolatrous.

4thly. He asserted it to be κατὰ ταυτοβουλίαν, or on the account of the consent and agreement that was between the will of God, and the will of the man Christ Jesus. But no other union will thence ensue, but what is between God and the angels in heaven; in whom there is a perfect compliance with the will of God in all things. Wherefore, if this be the foundation of this union, he might be said to take on him the nature of angels, as well as the seed of Abraham, which is expressly denied by the apostle, Heb. ii. 16, 17.

5thly. Καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν, by an equivocal denomination, the name of the one person, namely, of the Son of God, being accommodated unto the other, namely the son of man. So they were called gods unto whom the word of God came. But this no way answers any one divine testimony, wherein the name of God is assigned unto the Lord Christ, as those wherein God is said 'to lay down his life for us,' and to 'purchase his church with his own blood,' to come and be 'manifest in the flesh,' wherein no homonymy or equivocation can take place. By all these ways he constituted a separable accidental union, wherein nothing in kind, but in degree only, was peculiar unto the man Christ Jesus.

But all these things, so far as they are true, belong unto the third thing to be considered in his person, namely, the communion, or mutual communication of the distinct natures therein. But his personal union consists not in any of them, nor in all of them together. Nor do they answer any of the multiplied testimonies given by the Holy Ghost unto this glorious mystery. Some few of them may be mentioned.

'The word was made flesh;' John i. 14. There can be but two senses of these words. (1st.) That the word ceased to be what it was, and was substantially turned into flesh. (2dly.) That continuing to be what it was, it was made to be also what before it was not. The first sense is destructive of the Divine Being, and all its essential properties. The other can be verified only herein, that the Word took that flesh, that is, our human nature to be his own, his own nature wherein he was made flesh, which is that we plead for. For this assertion, that the person of the Son took our na-

ture to be his own, is the same with that of the assumption of the human nature into personal subsistence with himself. And the ways of the presence of the Son of God with the man Christ Jesus before-mentioned, do express nothing in answer unto this divine testimony, that 'the Word was made flesh.'

'Being in the form of God he took on him the form of a servant, and became obedient;' Phil. ii. 7, 8. That by his being 'in the form of God,' his participation in and of the same divine nature with the Father is intended, these men grant. And that herein he was a person distinct from him Nestorius of old acknowledged, though it be by ours denied. But they can fancy no distinction that shall bear the denomination and relation of Father and Son, but all is inevitably included in it, which we plead for under that name. This person 'took on him the form of a servant;' that is, the nature of man in the condition of a servant. For it is the same with his being made of a woman, made under the law; or taking on him the seed of Abraham. And this person became obedient. It was in the human nature, in the form of a servant, wherein he was obedient. Wherefore that human nature was the nature of that person, a nature which he took on him and made his own, wherein he would be obedient. And that the human nature is the nature of the person of him who was in the form of God, is that hypostatical union which we believe and plead for.

'To us a son is given, to us a child is born, and he shall be called the mighty God;' Isa. ix. 6. The child and the mighty God are the same person, or he that is 'born a child' cannot be rightly called 'the mighty God.' And the truth of many other expressions in the Scripture hath its sole foundation in this hypostatical union. So the Son of God took on him the seed of Abraham, was 'made of a woman,' did 'partake of flesh and blood,' was 'manifest in the flesh,' that he who was born of the blessed virgin, was 'before Abraham,' that he was made of the 'seed of David according to the flesh,' whereby God purchased the 'church with his own blood,' are all spoken of one and the same person, and are not true but on the account of the union of the two natures therein. And all those who plead for the accidental metaphorical union, consisting in the instances before men-

tioned, do know well enough, that the true Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ is opposed by them.

3. Concurrent with, and in part consequent unto, this union is the communion of the distinct natures of Christ hypostatically united. And herein we may consider, (1.) What is peculiar unto the divine nature: (2.) What is common unto both.

(1.) There is a threefold communication of the divine nature unto the human, in this hypostatical union.

[1.] Immediate in the person of the Son. This is subsistence. In itself it is ἀνυπόστατος, that which hath not a subsistence of its own, which should give it individuation and distinction from the same nature in any other person. But it hath its subsistence in the person of the Son, which thereby is its own. The divine nature, as in that person, is its *suppositum*.

[2.] By the Holy Spirit he filled that nature with an allfulness of habitual grace, which I have at large explained elsewhere.

[3.] In all the acts of his office, by the divine nature, he communicated worth and dignity unto what was acted in and by the human nature.

For that which some have for a long season troubled the church withal, about such a real communication of the properties of the divine nature unto the human, which should neither be a transfusion of them into it, so as to render it the subject of them; nor yet consist in a reciprocal denomination from their mutual in-being in the same subject, it is that which neither themselves do, nor can any other well understand.

(2.) Wherefore concerning the communion of the natures in this personal union, three things are to be observed, which the Scripture, reason, and the ancient church, do all concur in.

[1.] Each nature doth preserve its own natural, essential properties, entirely unto, and in itself; without mixture, without composition or confusion, without such a real communication of the one unto the other, so as that the one should become the subject of the properties of the other. The Deity, in the abstract, is not made the humanity, nor on the contrary. The divine nature is not made temporary,

finite, limited, subject to passion or alteration by this union; nor is the human nature rendered immense, infinite, omnipotent. Unless this be granted, there will not be two natures in Christ, a divine and a human; nor indeed either of them, but somewhat else, composed of both.

[2.] Each nature operates in him according unto its essential properties. The divine nature knows all things, upholds all things, rules all things, acts by its presence every where; the human nature was born, yielded obedience, died, and rose again. But it is the same person, the same Christ, that acts all these things, the one nature being his, no less than the other. Wherefore,

[3.] The perfect complete work of Christ in every act of his mediatory office, in all that he did as the King, Priest, and Prophet of the church, in all that he did and suffered, in all that he continueth to do for us, in or by virtue of whether nature soever it be done or wrought, is not to be considered as the act of this or that nature in him alone, but it is the act and work of the whole person, of him that is both God and man in one person. And this gives occasion,

4. Unto that variety of enunciations which is used in the Scripture concerning him, which I shall name only and conclude.

(1.) Some things are spoken of the person of Christ, wherein the enunciation is verified with respect unto one nature only. As the 'Word was with God, and the Word was God;' John i. 1. 'Before Abraham was, I am;' John viii. 58. 'Upholding all things by the word of his power;' Heb. i. 3. These things are all spoken of the person of Christ; but belong unto it on account of his divine nature. So is it said of him. 'To us is a child born, to us a son is given;' Isa. ix. 6. 'A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;' Isa. liii. 3. They are spoken of the person of Christ, but are verified in human nature only, and the person on the account thereof.

(2.) Sometimes that is spoken of the person which belongs not distinctly and originally unto either nature, but doth belong unto him on the account of their union in him, which are the most direct enunciations concerning the person of Christ. So is he said to be the head, the king, priest, and prophet of the church; all which offices he bears, and

performs the acts of them, not on the singular account of this or that nature, but of the hypostatical union of them both.

(3.) Sometimes his person being denominated from one nature, the properties and acts of the other are assigned unto it. So they 'crucified the Lord of glory.' He is the Lord of glory on the account of his divine nature only; thence is his person denominated, when he is said to be crucified, which was in the human nature only. 'So God purchased his church with his own blood;' Acts xx. 28. The denomination of the person is from the divine nature only; he is God; but the act ascribed unto it, or what he did by his own blood, was of the human nature only. But the purchase that was made thereby, was the work of the person, as both God and man. So on the other side, 'the Son of Man who is in heaven;' John iii. 13. The denomination of the person is from the human nature only; 'the Son of man.' That ascribed unto it was with the respect unto the divine nature only; 'who is in heaven.'

(4.) Sometimes the person being denominated from one nature, that is ascribed unto it which is common unto both; or else being denominated from both, that which is proper unto one only is ascribed unto him. See Rom. ix. 4. Matt. xxii. 42.

These kinds of enunciations the ancients expressed by ἐναλλαγὴ, 'alteration;' ἀλλαίωσις, 'permutation;' κοινότης, 'communion;' τρόπος ἀντιδόσεως, 'the manner of mutual position;' κοινωνία ἰδιωμάτων, 'the communication of properties;' and other the like expressions.

These things I have only mentioned, because they are commonly handled by others in their didactical and polemical discourses concerning the person of Christ; and could not well be here utterly omitted.

CHAP. XIX.

The exaltation of Christ; with his present state and condition in glory during the continuance of his mediatory office.

THE apostle describing the great mystery of godliness, 'God manifest in the flesh;' by several degrees of ascent, he carrieth it within the vail, and leaves it there in glory, ἀνελήφθη ἐν δόξῃ, 1 Tim. iii. 16. God was manifest in the flesh, and 'received up into glory.' This assumption of our Lord Jesus Christ into glory, or his glorious reception in heaven, with his state and condition therein, is a principal article of the faith of the church, the great foundation of its hope and consolation in this world. This also we must therefore consider in our meditations on the person of Christ, and the use of it in our religion.

That which I especially intend herein, is his present state in heaven in the discharge of his mediatory office before the consummation of all things. Hereon doth the glory of God, and the especial concernment of the church, at present depend. For at the end of this dispensation he shall give up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, or cease from the administration of his mediatory office and power, as the apostle declares, 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. 'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom unto God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.'

All things fell by sin into an enmity unto the glory of God, and the salvation of the church. The removal of this enmity, and the destruction of all enemies, is the work that God committed unto his Son, in his incarnation and mediation; Eph. i. 10. This he was variously to accomplish in

the administration of all his offices. The enmity between God and us immediately, he removed by the blood of his cross, whereby he made peace; Eph. ii. 14—16. Which peace he continues and preserves by his intercession; Heb. vii. 26. 1 John ii. 2. The enemies themselves of the church's eternal welfare, namely, sin, death, the world, Satan, and hell, he subdues by his power. In the gradual accomplishment of this work; according as the church of the elect is brought forth in successive generations (in every one whereof the same work is to be performed), he is to continue unto the end and consummation of all things. Until then, the whole church will not be saved, and therefore his work not be finished. He will not cease his work whilst there is one of his elect to be saved, or one enemy to be subdued. He shall not faint, nor give over, until he hath sent forth judgment unto victory.

For the discharge of this work, he hath a sovereign power over all things in heaven and earth committed unto him. Herein he doth and must reign. And so absolutely is it vested in him, that upon the ceasing of the exercise of it, he himself is said to be made subject unto God. It is true, that the Lord Christ, in his human nature, is always less than, or inferior unto, God, even the Father. In that sense, he is in subjection unto him now in heaven. But yet he hath an actual exercise of divine power, wherein he is absolute and supreme. When this ceaseth, he shall be subject unto the Father in that nature, and only so. Wherefore when this work is perfectly fulfilled and ended, then shall all the mediatory actings of Christ cease for evermore. For God will then have completely finished the whole design of his wisdom and grace, in the constitution of his person and offices, and have raised up, and finished, the whole fabric of eternal glory. Then will God 'be all in all.' In his own immense nature and blessedness he shall not only be 'all' essentially and causally, but 'in all' also; he shall immediately be all in and unto us.

This state of things, when God shall immediately 'be all in all,' we can have no just comprehension of in this life. Some refreshing notions of it may be framed in our minds, from those apprehensions of the divine perfections which reason can attain unto; and their suitableness to yield eter-

nal rest, satisfaction, and blessedness, in that enjoyment of them, whereof our nature is capable. Howbeit of these things in particular, the Scripture is silent; however it testifies our eternal reward and blessedness to consist alone in the enjoyment of God.

But there is somewhat else proposed, as the immediate object of the faith of the saints at present, as unto what they shall enjoy upon their departure out of this world. And Scripture revelations extend unto the state of things unto the end of the world, and no longer.

Wherefore heaven is now principally represented unto us, as the place of the residence and glory of Jesus Christ, in the administration of his office; and our blessedness to consist in a participation thereof, and communion with him therein. So he prays for all them who are given him of his Father, 'that they may be where he is, to behold his glory;' John xvii. 24. It is not the essential glory of his divine person that he intends, which is absolutely the same with that of the Father: but it is a glory that is peculiarly his own; a glory which the Father hath given him, because he loved him. 'My glory which thou gavest me, for thou lovedst me.' Nor is it merely the glorified state of his human nature that he intendeth, as was before declared in the consideration of the fifth verse of this chapter, where he prayeth for this glory. However, this is not excluded; for unto all those that love him, it will be no small portion of their blessed refreshment, to behold that individual nature, wherein he suffered for them, undergoing all sorts of reproaches, contempts, and miseries, now unchangably stated in incomprehensible glory. But the glory which God gives unto Christ, in the phrase of the Scripture, principally is the glory of his exaltation in his mediatory office. It is the 'all power' that is given him in heaven and earth; the 'name' that he hath 'above every name,' as he sits on the right hand of the majesty on high. In the beholding and contemplation hereof, with holy joy and delight, consists no small part of that blessedness and glory which the saints above at present enjoy, and which all others of them shall so do, who depart this life before the consummation of all things. And in the due consideration hereof consists a great part of the exercise of that faith, which is 'the evidence of things not seen, and

which by making them present unto us, supplies the room of sight. This is the ground whereon our hope doth anchor; namely, the things 'within the veil,' Heb. vi. 19. which directs us unto the temple administration of the mediatory office of Christ. And it is for the strengthening of our faith and hope in God, through him, that we do, and that we ought to inquire into these things.

The consideration of the present state of Christ in heaven, may be reduced unto three heads:

1. The glorification of his human nature; what it hath in common with, and wherein it differs in kind from, the glory of all saints whatever.

2. His mediatory exaltation; or the especial glory of his person as mediator.

3. The exercise and discharge of his office in this state of things; which is what at present I shall principally inquire into. I shall not speak at all of the nature of glorified bodies, nor of any thing that is common unto the human nature of Christ, and the same nature in glorified saints; but only what is peculiar unto himself. And hereunto I shall premise one general observation.

All perfections whereof human nature is capable, abiding what it was in both the essential parts of it, soul and body, do belong unto the Lord Christ in his glorified state. To ascribe unto it what is inconsistent with its essence, is not an assignation of glory unto its state and condition, but a destruction of its being. To affix unto the human nature divine properties, as ubiquity or immensity, is to deprive it of its own. The essence of his body is no more changed than that of his soul. It is a fundamental article of faith, that he is in the same body in heaven, wherein he conversed here on earth; as well as the faculties of his rational soul are continued the same in him. This is that 'holy thing' which was framed immediately by the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin. This is that 'Holy One' which, when it was in the grave, saw no corruption. This is that body which was offered for us, wherein he bare our sins on the tree. To fancy any such change in, or of, this body, by its glorification, as that it should not continue essentially and substantially the same that it was, is to overthrow the faith of the church in a principal article of it. We believe that the very

same body wherein he suffered for us, without any alteration as unto its substance, essence, or integral parts, and not another body of an ethereal, heavenly structure, wherein is nothing of flesh, blood, or bones, by which he so frequently testified the faithfulness of God in his incarnation, is still that temple wherein God dwells, and wherein he administers in the holy place not made with hands. The body which was pierced, is that which all eyes shall see, and no other.

On this foundation I willingly allow all perfections in the glorified human nature of Christ, which are consistent with its real form and essence. I shall, therefore, only in some instances inquire into the present glory of the human nature of Christ, wherein it differs either in kind or degree from the glory of all other saints whatever. For even among them I freely allow different degrees in glory, which the eternal order of things, that is, the will of God, in the disposal of all things unto his own glory, doth require.

(1.) There is that wherein the present glory of the human nature of Christ differeth, in kind and nature, from that which any other of the saints are partakers of, or shall be so after the resurrection. And this is,

[1.] The eternal subsistence of that nature of his, in the person of the Son of God. As this belongs unto its dignity and honour, so it doth also unto its inherent glory. This is, and shall be, eternally peculiar unto him, in distinction from, and exaltation above, the whole creation of God, angels, and men. Those by whom this is denied, instead of the glorious name whereby God doth call him, 'Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God,' &c. do call him Icabod, where is the glory? or, there is none that is peculiar unto him. But the mystery hereof, according unto our measure, and in answer unto our design, we have already declared. And this glory he had indeed in this world, from the first instant of his incarnation or conception in the womb. But, as unto the demonstration of it, he emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation under the form of a servant. But now the glory of it is illustriously displayed in the sight of all his holy ones. Some inquire, whether the saints in heaven do perfectly comprehend the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God? I do not well understand what is meant by perfectly comprehend: but this is certain, that what we have

now by faith, we shall have there by sight. For as we live now by faith, so shall we there by sight. No finite creature can have an absolute comprehension of that which is infinite. We shall never search out the Almighty to perfection in any of his works of infinite wisdom. Wherefore this only I shall say, there is such a satisfactory evidence in heaven, not only of the truth, but also of the nature of this mystery, as that the glory of Christ therein is manifest as an eternal object of divine adoration and honour. The enjoyment of heaven is usually called the beatifical vision; that is, such an intellectual present view, apprehension, and sight of God, and his glory, especially as manifested in Christ, as will make us blessed unto eternity. Wherefore, in the contemplation of this mystery doth a great part of our blessedness consist; and farther, our thoughts cannot attain. This is that wherein the glory of the human nature of Christ doth essentially excel, and differ from that of any other blessed creature whatever. And hereon other things do depend. For,

[2.] Hence the union of the human nature of Christ unto God, and the communications of God unto it, are of another kind than those of the blessed saints. In these things, namely, our union with God, and his communications unto us, doth our blessedness and glory consist.

In this world, believers are united unto God by faith. It is by faith that they cleave unto him with purpose of heart. In heaven, it shall be by love. Ardent love, with delight, complacency, and joy, from a clear apprehension of God's infinite goodness and beauty now made present unto us, now enjoyed by us, shall be the principle of our eternal adherence unto him and union with him. His communications unto us here, are by an external efficiency of power. He communicates of himself unto us in the effects of his goodness, grace, and mercy, by the operations of his Spirit in us. Of the same kind will all the communications of the divine nature be unto us unto all eternity. It will be by what he worketh in us by his Spirit and power. There is no other way of the emanation of virtue from God, unto any creature. But these things in Christ are of another nature. This union of his human nature unto God, is immediate in the person of the Son; ours is mediate by the Son as clothed with our nature. The way of the communications of the divine

nature unto the human in his person, is what we cannot comprehend; we have no notion of it; nothing whereby it may be illustrated. There is nothing equal to it, nothing like it, in all the works of God. As it is a creature, it must subsist in eternal dependence on God; neither hath it any thing but what it receives from him. For this belongs essentially unto the divine nature, to be the only independent eternal spring and fountain of all being and goodness. Nor can Omnipotency itself exalt a creature into any such condition, as that it should not always, and in all things, depend absolutely on the Divine Being. But as unto the way of the communications between the divine and human nature in the personal union, we know it not. But whether they be of life, power, light, or glory, they are of another kind than that whereby we do or shall receive all things. For all things are given unto us, are wrought in us, as was said, by an external efficiency of power. The glorious immediate emanations of virtue, from the divine unto the human nature of Christ, we understand not. Indeed the actings of natures of different kinds, where both are finite in the same person one towards the other, is of a difficult apprehension. Who knows how directive power and efficacy proceeds from the soul, and is communicated unto the body, unto every the least minute action, in every member of it; so as that there is no distance between the direction and the action, or the accomplishment of it; or how, on the other hand, the soul is affected with sorrow or trouble in the moment wherein the body feeleth pain, so as that no distinction can be made between the body's sufferings and the soul's sorrow? How much more is this mutual communication in the same person of divers natures above our comprehension, where one of them is absolutely infinite? Somewhat will be spoken to it afterward. And herein doth this eternal glory differ from that of all other glorified creatures whatever. And,

[3.] Hence the human nature of Christ, in his divine person, and together with it, is the object of all divine adoration and worship; Rev. v. 13. All creatures whatever do for ever ascribe 'blessing, honour, glory, and power, unto the Lamb,' in the same manner as unto him who sits on the throne. This we have declared before. But no other creature either is, or ever can be, exalted into such a condition

of glory, as to be the object of any divine worship, from the meanest creature which is capable of the performance of it. Those who ascribe divine or religious honour unto the saints or angels, as is done in the church of Rome, do both rob Christ of the principal flower of his imperial crown, and sacrilegiously attempt to adorn others with it, which they abhor.

[4.] The glory that God designed to accomplish in and by him, is now made evident unto all the holy ones that are about the throne. The great design of the wisdom and grace of God from eternity, was to declare and manifest all the holy glorious properties of his nature, in and by Jesus Christ. And this is that wherein he will acquiesce, with which he is well pleased. When this is fully accomplished, he will use no other way or means for the manifestation of his glory. Herein is the end and blessedness of all.

Wherefore the principal work of faith, whilst we are in this world, is to behold this glory of God, as so represented unto us in Christ. In the exercise of faith therein, is our conformity unto him carried on unto perfection; 2 Cor. iii. 18. And unto this end, or that we may do so, he powerfully communicates unto our minds a saving internal light, without which we can neither behold his glory, nor give glory unto him. 'He who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ;' 2 Cor. iv. 6. The end, I say, why God communicates a spiritual supernatural light unto the minds of believers, is that they may be able to discern the manifestation and revelation of his glory in Christ; which is hid from the world; Eph. i. 17—19. Col. ii. 2. Howbeit, whilst we are here, we see it but 'darkly as in a glass;' it is not evident unto us in its own lustre and beauty. Yea, the remainder of our darkness herein, is the cause of all our weakness, fears, and disconsolations. Want of a steady view of this glory of God, is that which exposeth us unto impressions from all our temptations. And the light of our minds therein, is that whereby we are changed and transformed into the likeness of Christ.

But in heaven this is conspicuously and gloriously manifest unto all the blessed ones that are before the throne of God. They do not behold it by faith in various degrees of

light, as we do here below. They have not apprehensions of some impressions of divine glory on the person of Christ and the human nature therein, with the work which he did perform, which is the utmost of our attainment. But they behold openly and plainly the whole glory of God, all the characters of it, illustriously manifesting themselves in him, in what he is, in what he hath done, in what he doth. Divine wisdom, grace, goodness, love, power, do all shine forth in him unto the contemplation of all his saints in whom he is admired. And in the vision hereof consists no small part of our eternal blessedness. For what can be more satisfactory, more full of glory unto the souls of believers, than clearly to comprehend the mystery of the wisdom, grace, and love of God in Christ? This is that which the prophets, at a great distance, inquired diligently into; that which the angels bow down to look towards; that whose declaration is the life and glory of the gospel. To behold in one view the reality, the substance of all that was typified and represented by the beautiful fabric of the tabernacle and temple which succeeded in the room thereof; of all the utensils of them, and services performed in them; all that the promises of the Old Testament did contain, or the declarations of the New; as it is the most satisfactory, blessed, and glorious state, that by the present light of faith we can desire or long for, so it evidenced a glory in Christ of another kind and nature, than what any creature can be participant in. I shall therefore state it unto our consideration, with some few observations concerning it.

1st. Every believer seeth here in this life, an excellency, a glory in the mystery of God in Christ. They do so in various degrees, unless it be in times of temptation, when any of them walk in darkness, and have no light. The view and prospect hereinto is far more clear, and accompanied with more evidence in some, than in others, according unto the various degrees of their faith and light. The spiritual sight of some is very weak, and their views of the glory of God in Christ are much obscured with inevidence, darkness, and instability. This, in many, is occasioned by the weakness of their natural ability, in more, by spiritual sloth and negligence, in that they have not habitually 'exercised their senses to discern good and evil,' as the apo-

stle speaks, Heb. v. 14. Some want instruction, and some have their minds corrupted by false opinions. Howbeit, all true believers have the 'eyes of their understanding opened,' to discern, in some measure, the glory of God, as represented to them in the gospel. Unto others it is foolishness; or they think there is that darkness in it whereunto they cannot approach. But all the darkness is in themselves. This is the distinguishing property and character of saving faith; it beholds the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; it makes us to discern the manifestation of the glory of God in Christ, as declared in the gospel.

2dly. Our apprehension of this glory is the spring of all our obedience, consolation, and hope, in this world. Faith discovering this manifestation of the glory of God in Christ, engageth the soul unto universal obedience, as finding therein abundant reason for it, and encouragement unto it. Then is obedience truly evangelical, when it ariseth from this acting of faith, and is thereon accompanied with liberty and gratitude. And herein is laid all the foundation of our consolations for the present, and hope for the future. For the whole security of our present and future condition depends on the actings of God towards us, according as he hath manifested himself in Christ.

3dly. From the exercise of faith herein, doth divine love, love unto God, proceed; therein alone it is enlivened and inflamed. On these apprehensions doth a believing soul cry out, How great is his goodness? how great is his beauty? God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is the only object of divine love. Under that representation of him alone, can the soul cleave unto him with ardent love, constant delight, and intense affections. All other notions of love unto God in sinners, as we are all, are empty fancies. Wherefore,

4thly. All believers are, or should be, conversant in their minds about these things, with longings, expectations, and desires after nearer approaches unto them, and enjoyments of them. And if we are not so, we are earthly, carnal and unspiritual. Yea, the want of this frame, the neglect of this duty, is the sole cause why many professors are so carnal in their minds, and so worldly in their conversations. But this is the state of them who live in the due exercise of faith.

This they pant and breath after; namely, that they may be delivered from all darkness, unstable thoughts, and imperfect apprehensions, of the glory of God in Christ. After these things do those who have received the 'first-fruits of the Spirit,' groan within themselves. This glory they would 'behold with open face,' not as at present 'in a glass,' but in its own beauty. What do we want? what would we be at? what do our souls desire? is it not that we might have a more full, clear, stable, comprehension of the wisdom, love, grace, goodness, holiness, righteousness, and power of God, as declared and exalted in Christ unto our redemption and eternal salvation? To see the glory of God in Christ, to understand his love unto him, and valuation of him, to comprehend his nearness unto God, all evidenced in his mediation, is that which he hath promised unto us, and which we are pressing after. See John xvii. 23, 24.

5thly. Heaven will satisfy all those desires and expectations. To have them fully satisfied, is heaven and eternal blessedness. This fills the souls of them who are already departed in the faith, with admiration, joy, and praises. See Rev. v. 9—11. Herein is the glory of Christ absolutely of another kind and nature, than that of any other creature whatever. And from hence it is, that our glory shall principally consist in beholding his glory, because the whole glory of God is manifested in him.

And by the way, we may see hence the vanity as well as the idolatry of them who would represent Christ in glory, as the object of our adoration in pictures and images. They fashion wood or stone into the likeness of a man. They adorn it with colours and flourishes of art, to set it forth unto the senses and fancies of superstitious persons, as having a resemblance of glory. And when they have done, they lavish gold out of the bag, as the prophet speaks, in various sorts of supposed ornaments; such as are so only to the vainest sort of mankind; and so propose it as an image or resemblance of Christ in glory. But what is there in it that hath the least respect thereunto, the least likeness of it? Nay, is it not the most effectual means that can be devised to divert the minds of men from true and real apprehensions of it? Doth it teach any thing of the subsistence of the human nature of Christ in the person of the Son of God?

Nay, doth it not obliterate all thoughts of it? What is represented thereby of the union of it unto God, and the immediate communications of God unto it? Doth it declare the manifestation of all the glorious properties of the divine nature in him? One thing indeed they ascribe unto it that is proper unto Christ, namely, that it is to be adored and worshipped, whereby they add idolatry unto their folly; persons who know not what it is to live by faith, whose minds are never raised by spiritual heavenly contemplations, who have no design in religion but to gratify their inward superstition by their outward senses, may be pleased for a time, and ruined for ever, by these delusions. Those who have real faith in Christ, and love unto him, have a more glorious object for their exercise.

And we may hereby examine both our own notions of the state of glory, and our preparations for it, and whether we are in any measure 'made meet for the inheritance of the saints of light.' More grounds of this trial will be afterward suggested, these laid down may not be passed by. Various are the thoughts of men about the future state, the things which are not seen, which are eternal. Some rise no higher, but unto hopes of escaping hell, or everlasting miseries, when they die. Yet the heathen had their Elysian fields, and Mahomet his sensual paradise. Others have apprehensions of I know not what glistering glory, that will please and satisfy them, they know not how, when they can be here no longer. But this state is quite of another nature, and the blessedness of it is spiritual and intellectual. Take an instance in one of the things before laid down. The glory of heaven, consists in the full manifestation of divine wisdom, goodness, grace, holiness, of all the properties of the nature of God in Christ. In the clear perception and constant contemplation hereof, consists no small part of eternal blessedness. What then are our present thoughts of these things? What joy, what satisfaction have we in the sight of them, which we have by faith through divine revelation? What is our desire to come unto the perfect comprehension of them? How do we like this heaven? What do we find in ourselves that will be eternally satisfied hereby? According as our desires are after them, such and no other are our desires of the true heaven, of the residence of

blessedness and glory. Neither will God bring us unto heaven whether we will or no. If through the ignorance and darkness of our minds, if through the earthliness and sensuality of our affections, if through a fulness of the world, and the occasions of it, if by the love of life, and our present enjoyments, we are strangers unto these things, we are not conversant about them, we long not after them; we are not in the way towards their enjoyment. The present satisfaction we receive in them by faith, is the best evidence we have of an indefeasible interest in them. How foolish is it to lose the first fruits of these things in our own souls, those entrances into blessedness, which the contemplation of them through faith would open unto us, and hazard our everlasting enjoyment of them, by an eager pursuit of an interest in perishing things here below. This, this is that which ruins the souls of most, and keeps the faith of many at so low an ebb, that it is hard to discover any genuine working of it.

(2.) The glory of the human nature of Christ differs from that of the saints after the resurrection, in things which concern the degrees of it. For,

[1.] The glory of his body is the example and pattern of what they shall be conformed unto. 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself;' Phil. iii. 21. Our bodies were made vile by the entrance of sin. Thence they became brothers to the worms, and sisters unto corruption. To death and the grave, with rottenness and corruption therein, they are designed. At the resurrection they shall be new-framed, fashioned and moulded. Not only all the detriment and disadvantage they received by the entrance of sin shall be removed, but many additions of glorious qualifications which they had not in their primitive natural constitution shall be added unto them. And this shall be done by the almighty power of Christ; that working or exercise of it, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. But of this state whereinto we shall be changed by the power of Christ, his own body is the pattern and example. A similitude of it is all that we shall attain unto. And that which is the idea and exemplar in any state, is the rule and stand-

ard unto all others. Such is the glory of Christ; ours consists in conformity thereunto; which gives him the preeminence.

[2.] As the state of his body is more glorious than ours shall be, so will that of his soul in itself be made appear to be more excellent than what we are capable of. For that fulness of the Spirit without measure, and of all grace which his nature was capacitated for by virtue of the hypostatical union, doth now shine forth in all excellency and glory. The grace that was in Christ in this world, is the same with that which is in him now in heaven. The nature of it was not changed, when he ceased to be *viator*, but is only brought into a more glorious exercise now he is *comprehensor*. And all his graces are now made manifest, the veil being taken from them, and light communicated to discern them. As in this world, he had unto the most neither form nor comeliness for which he should be desired, partly from the vail which was cast on his inward beauty, from his outward condition, but principally from the darkness which was on their minds, whereby they were disenabled to discern the glory of spiritual things; notwithstanding which, some then in the light of faith 'saw his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth:' so now the veil is removed, and the darkness wholly taken away from the minds of the saints; he is in the glory of his graces altogether lovely and desirable. And although the grace which is in believers, be of the same nature with that which is Christ Jesus, and shall be changed into glory, after the likeness of his, yet is it, and always shall be, incomprehensibly short of what dwells in him. And herein also doth his glory gradually excel that of all other creatures whatever.

But we must here draw a vail over what yet remains. For it doth not yet appear what we ourselves shall be. Much less is it evident what are, and what will be, the glories of the head above all the members; even then when we shall 'be made like unto him.' But it must be remembered, that whereas, at the entrance of this discourse, we so proposed the consideration of the present state of the Lord Christ in heaven, as that which should have an 'end at the consummation of all things:' what hath been spoken concerning

the glory of his human nature in itself, is not of that kind, but what abideth unto eternity. All the things mentioned abide in him, and unto him, for evermore.

2. The second thing to be considered in the present state and condition of Christ, is his mediatory exaltation. And two things with respect thereunto may be inquired into. (1.) The way of his entrance into that state above. (2.) The state itself, with the glory of it.

(1.) The way of entrance into the exercise of his mediatory office in heaven, is expressed, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'He was received into glory,' or rather gloriously. And he 'entered into glory;' Luke xxiv. 26. This assumption and entrance into glory was upon his ascension described, Acts i. 9. 11. 'He was taken up into heaven,' ἀνελήφθη ἐν δόξῃ, by an act of divine power; and 'he went into heaven,' εἰσῆλθεν εἰς δόξην, in his own choice and will, as that which he was exalted unto. And this ascension of Christ, in his human nature into heaven, is a fundamental article of the faith of the church. And it falls under a double consideration.

[1.] As it was triumphant, as he was a king.

[2.] As it was gracious, as he was a priest. His ascension as unto change of place, from earth to heaven, and as unto the outward manner of it, was one and the same, and at once accomplished. But as unto the end of it, which is the exercise of all his offices, it had various respects, various prefigurations, and is distinctly proposed unto us, with reference unto them.

[1.] In his ascension, as it was triumphant, three things may be considered.

1st. The manner of it, with its representation of old.

2dly. The place whereinto he ascended.

3dly. The end of it, or what was the work which he had to do thereon.

1st. As unto the manner of it, it was openly triumphant and glorious. So is it described, Ephes. iv. 8. He 'ascended up on high; he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' And respect is had unto the prefiguration of it, at the giving of the law, Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. where the glory of it is more fully expressed, 'The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast as-

cended on high, thou hast led captivity captive,' &c. The most glorious appearance of God upon the earth, under the Old Testament, was that on Mount Sinai, in the giving of the law. And as his presence was there attended with all his glorious angels; so, when upon the finishing of that work, he returned or ascended into heaven, it was in the way of a triumph with all that royal attendance. And this prefigured the ascent of Christ into heaven, upon his fulfilling of the law, all that was required in it, or signified by it. He ascended triumphantly after he had given the law, as a figure of his triumphant ascent after he had fulfilled it. Having then 'spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them;' Col. ii. 15. So he led captivity captive; or all the adverse powers of the salvation of the church, in triumph at his chariot wheels. I deny not but that his leading 'captivity captive,' principally respects his spiritual conquest over Satan, and the destruction of his power. Yet whereas he is also said to 'spoil principalities and powers, making shew of them openly,' and triumphing over them, I no way doubt but Satan, the head of the apostacy, and the chief princes of darkness, were led openly in sight of all the holy angels, as conquered captives. The 'seed of the woman' having now broken the 'head of the serpent.' This is that which is so emphatically expressed, Psalm xlvii. throughout. The ground and cause of all the triumphant rejoicing of the church therein declared, is, that God was 'gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet,' ver. 5. which is nothing but the glorious ascent of Christ into heaven, said to be accompanied with shouts, and the sound of a trumpet, the expressions of triumphant rejoicing, because of the glorious acclamations that were made thereon, by all the attendants of the throne of God.

2dly. The place whither he thus ascended, is on high. 'He ascended up on high;' Ephes. iv. 8. That is, heaven. He went into heaven; Acts i. 11. And the 'heavens must receive him;' ver. 3. 21. Not these aspectable heavens which we behold. For in his ascension 'he passed through them,' Heb. iv. 14. and is made 'higher than they;' chap. vii. 27. But into the place of the residence of God in glory and majesty; Heb. i. 3. viii. 1. xii. 2. There on 'the throne of

God,' Rev. iii. 21. 'On the right hand of the majesty on high,' he sits down in the full possession and exercise of all power and authority. This is the palace of this king of saints and nations. There is his royal eternal throne; Heb. i. 8. 'And many crowns are on his head,' Rev. xix. 12. or all dignity and honour. And he who, in a pretended imitation of him, wears a triple crown, hath upon his own head thereby, 'the name of blasphemy;' Rev. xiii. 1. There are before him his 'sceptre of righteousness,' his 'rod of iron,' all the regalia of his glorious kingdom. For by these emblems of power doth the Scripture represent unto us his sovereign divine authority in the execution of his kingly office. Thus he ascended triumphantly, having conquered his enemies; thus he reigneth gloriously over all.

3dly. The end for which he thus triumphantly ascended into heaven, is twofold.

(1st.) The overturning and destruction of all his enemies in all their remaining powers. He rules them 'with a rod of iron,' and in his due time will 'dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel;' Psal. ii. 9. For he must 'reign until all his enemies are made his footstool;' 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. Psal. cx. 1. Although at present, for the most part, they despise his authority, yet they are all absolutely in his power, and shall fall under his eternal displeasure.

(2dly.) The preservation, continuation, and rule of his church, both as unto the internal state of the souls of them that believe, and the external order of the church in its worship and obedience, and its preservation under, and from all, oppositions and persecutions in this world. There is in each of these such a continual exercise of divine wisdom, power, and care, the effects of them are so great and marvellous, and the fruits of them so abundant unto the glory of God, that the world would 'not contain the books that might be written' of them; but to handle them distinctly is not our present design.

[2.] His ascension may be considered as gracious; as the ascent of a high priest. And herein the things beforementioned are of a distinct consideration.

1st. As to the manner of it, and the design of it, he gives an account of them himself; John xx. 17. His design herein was not the taking on him the exercise of his power, kingdom,

and glorious rule; but the acting with God on the behalf of his disciples. 'I go,' saith he, 'to my Father, and to your Father, to my God, and to your God;' not his God and Father with respect unto eternal generation, but as he was their God and Father also. And he was so, as he was their God and Father in the same covenant with himself; wherein he was to procure of God all good things for them. Through the blood of this everlasting covenant, namely, his own blood, whereby this covenant was established, and all the good things of it secured unto the church, he was 'brought again from the dead,' that he might live ever to communicate them unto the church; Heb. xiii. 20, 21. With this design in his ascension, and the effects of it, did he often comfort and refresh the hearts of his disciples, when they were ready to faint on the apprehensions of his leaving of them here below; John xiv. 1, 2. xvi. 5—7. And this was typified by the ascent of the high priest, unto the temple of old. The temple was situated on a hill, high and steep, so as that there was no approach unto it but by stairs. Hence in their wars it was looked on as a most impregnable fortress. And the solemn ascent of the high-priest into it on the day of expiation, had a resemblance of this ascent of Christ into heaven. For after he had offered the sacrifices in the outward court, and made atonement for sin, he entered into the most holy place, a type of heaven itself, as the apostle declares, Heb. ix. 24. of heaven, as it was the place whereinto our high priest was to enter. And it was a joyful ascent, though not triumphant. All the Psalms, from the 120th to the 134th, inclusively, whose titles are שיר המעלות, 'songs of degrees,' or rather ascents or risings, being generally songs of praise and exhortations to have respect unto the sanctuary, were sung to God at the resting places of that ascent, especially was this represented on the day of jubilee. The proclamation of the jubilee was on the same day that the high priest entered into the holy place; and at the same time; namely, on the 'tenth day of the seventh month;' Levit. xvi. 29. xxv. 9. Then did the trumpet sound throughout the land, the whole church; and liberty was proclaimed unto all servants, captives, and such as had sold their possessions; that they might return unto them again. This being a great type of the spiritual deliverance

of the church, the noise of the trumpet was called the joyful sound, Psal. lxxxix. 15. 'Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.' Those who are made partakers of spiritual deliverance, shall walk before God in a sense of his love and grace. This is the ascent of our high priest into his sanctuary, when he 'proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified;' Isa. lxi. 2, 3. For in this ascension of Christ, proclamation was made in the gospel, of mercy, pardon, peace, joy, and everlasting refreshments, unto all that were distressed by sin, with a communication of righteousness unto them, to the eternal glory of God. Such was the entrance of our high priest into heaven, with acclamations of joy and praise unto God.

2dly. The place whereinto he thus entered was the sanctuary above, the 'tabernacle not made with hands;' Heb. viii. 2. It was into heaven itself, not absolutely, but as it is the temple of God, as the throne of grace and mercy-seat are in it, which must farther be spoken unto immediately.

3dly. The end why the Lord Christ thus ascended, and thus entered into the holy place, was 'to appear in the presence of God for us,' and to 'make intercession for all that come unto God by him;' Heb. vii. 26, 27. ix. 24. 25.

He ascended triumphantly into heaven, as Solomon ascended into his glorious throne of judgment; described 1 Kings x. 18—20. As David was the type of his conquest over all the enemies of his church, so was Solomon of his glorious reign. The types were multiplied because of their imperfection. Then came unto him the queen of Sheba, the type of the Gentile converts and the church. When נדיבי עמים, the 'voluntaries of the people' (those made willing in the day of his power, Psal. cx. 3.) 'gathered themselves to the people of the God of Abraham,' and were taken in his covenant; Psal. xlvii. 9. But he ascended graciously, as the high-priest went into the holy place. Not to rule all

things gloriously with mighty power, not to use his 'sword and his sceptre,' but to 'appear as an high priest' in a 'garment down to the foot, and a golden girdle about his paps,' Rev. i. 13. as in a tabernacle, or temple, before a throne of grace. His sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, adds to the glory of his priestly office, but belongs not unto the execution of it. So it was prophesied of him, that 'he should be a priest on his throne;' Zech. vi. 13.

It may be added hereunto, than when he thus left this world and ascended into glory, the great promise he made unto his disciples, as they were to be preachers of the gospel, and in them unto all that should succeed them in that office, was, that he would 'send the Holy Spirit unto them,' to teach and guide them, to lead them into all truth, to declare unto them the mysteries of the will, grace, and love of God, for the use of the whole church. This he promised to do, and did, in the discharge of his prophetical office. And although his giving 'gifts unto men' was an act of his kingly power, yet it was for the end of his prophetical office.

From what hath been spoken, it is evident that the Lord Christ 'ascended into heaven,' or was received up into glory, with this design, namely, to exercise his office of mediation in the behalf of the church, until the end should be. As this was his grace, that when he was rich, for our sakes he became poor; so when he was made rich again for his own sake, he lays forth all the riches of his glory and power on our behalf.

2. The glory of the state and condition whereinto Christ thus entered, is the next thing to be considered. For he is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. And as his ascension with the ends of it were twofold, or of a double consideration, so was his glory that ensued thereon. For his present mediatory state consists either in the glory of his power and authority; or in the glory of his love and grace; his glory as a king, or his glory as a priest. For the first of these, or his royal glory, in sovereign power and authority over the whole creation of God, all in heaven and earth, persons and things, angels and men, good and bad, alive and dead, all things spiritual and eternal, grace, gifts, and glory; his right and power, or ability, to dispose of all things according unto his will and pleasure I have so fully

for sin. By the continual representation of it, and of himself as a 'lamb that had been slain,' he procures the application of the virtues and benefits of it in reconciliation and peace with God, unto their souls and consciences. Hence are all believers sprinkled and washed with his blood in all generations; in the application of the virtues of it unto them, as shed for them.

2dly. To undertake their protection, and to plead their cause against all the accusations of Satan. He yet accuseth and chargeth them before God. But Christ is their advocate at the throne of grace, effectually frustrating all his attempts; Rev. xii. 10. Zech. iii. 2.

3dly. To intercede for them; as unto the communication of all grace and glory, all supplies of the Spirit, the accomplishment of all the promises of the covenant towards them, 1 John ii. 1, 2. This is the work of Christ in heaven. In these things, as the high-priest of the church, doth he continue to administer his mediatory office on their behalf. And herein is he attended with the songs and joyful acclamations of all the holy ones that are in the presence of God, giving glory to God by him.

(2.) As unto the manner of this glorious administration, sundry things are to be considered.

[1.] That this transaction of things in heaven, being in the temple of God, and before the throne of grace, is a solemn instituted worship at present, which shall cease at the end of the world. Religious worship it is; or that wherein and whereby all the saints above do give glory to God. And it is instituted worship, not that which is merely natural, in that it is God's especial appointment in and by Christ the Mediator. It is a church state which is constituted hereby, wherein these glorious ordinances are celebrated; and such a state as shall not be eternal, but hath its time allotted unto it. And believers at present, have, by faith, an admission into communion with this church above, in all its divine worship. For 'we are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the

spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel;' Heb. xii. 22—24. A church state doth the apostle most expressly represent unto us. It is Sion, Jerusalem, the great assembly: the names of the church-state under the Old Testament. And it is a state above, the heavenly Jerusalem, where are all the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; in themselves, though not in their state as to the restitution of their bodies at the resurrection. And a holy worship is there in this great assembly. For not only is Jesus in it as the Mediator of the covenant; but there is the 'blood of sprinkling' also, in the effectual application of it unto the church. Hereinto have we an entrance. In this holy assembly and worship have we communion by faith whilst we are here below; Heb. x. 19—22. O that my soul might abide and abound in this exercise of faith: that I might yet enjoy a clearer prospect of this glory, and inspection into the beauty and order of this blessed assembly. How inconceivable is the representation that God here makes of the glory of his wisdom, love, grace, goodness, and mercy, in Christ? How excellent is the manifestation of the glory and honour of Christ in his person and offices, the glory given him by the Father? How little a portion do we know, or can have experience in, of the refreshing, satiating communications of divine love and goodness, unto all the members of this assembly; or of that unchangeable delight in beholding the glory of Christ, and of God in him; of that ardency of affections wherewith they cleave unto him, and continual exultation of spirit, whereby they triumph in the praises of God, that are in all the members of it? To enter into this assembly by faith, to join with it in the assignation of praises unto 'him that sits on the throne, and to the lamb for evermore,' to labour after a frame of heart in holy affections, and spiritual delight, in some correspondency with that which is in the saints above, is the duty, and ought to be the design, of the church of believers here below. So much as we are farthered and assisted herein by our present ordinances, so much benefit and advantage have we by them, and no more. A constant view of this glory, will

cast contempt on all the desirable things of this world, and deliver our minds from any dreadful apprehensions of what is most terrible therein.

[2.] This heavenly worship in the sanctuary above, administered by the high-priest over the house of God, is conspicuously glorious. The glory of God is the great end of it, as shall be immediately declared; that is, the manifestation of it. The manifestation of the glory of God consists really in the effects of his infinite wisdom, goodness, grace, and power; declaratively in the express acknowledgment of it with praise. Herein, therefore, doth the solemn worship of God, in the sanctuary above consist; setting aside only the immediate actings of Christ in his intercession. It is a glorious express acknowledgment of the wisdom, love, goodness, grace, and power of God, in the redemption, sanctification, and salvation of the church by Jesus Christ, with a continual ascription of all divine honour unto him in the way of praise. For the manner of its performance, our present light into it, is but dark and obscure. Some things have an evidence in them. As,

1st. That there is nothing carnal in it, or such things as are suited unto the fancies and imaginations of men. In the thoughts of heaven, most persons are apt to frame images in their minds of such carnal things as they suppose they could be delighted withal. But they are far remote from the worship of this holy assembly. The worship of the gospel, which is spiritually glorious, makes a nearer approach unto it, than that of the temple, which was outwardly and carnally so.

2dly. It is not merely mental; or transacted only in the silent thoughts of each individual person. For, as we have shewed, it is the worship of a church assembly wherein they have all communion, and join in the performance of it. We know not well the way and mannner of communication between angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. It is expressed in the Scripture by voices, postures and gestures; which although they are not of the same nature as absolutely ours are, yet are they really significant of the things they would express, and a means of mutual communication. Yea I know not how far God may give them the use of voice and words, whereby to express his praise, as Moses talked

with Christ, at his transfiguration; Matt. xvii. 3. But the manner of it is such, as whereby the whole assembly above do jointly set forth and celebrate the praises of God. And the glory hereof consisteth in three things.

[1.] The blessed and beautiful order of all things in that sanctuary. Job describes the grave beneath to be a 'place without any order, and where the light is as darkness,' chap. x. 22. All above is order and light; every person and thing in its proper place and exercise.

1st. Heaven itself is a temple, a sanctuary, made so by the especial presence of God, and the ministration of Christ in the tabernacle of his human nature.

2dly. God is on the throne of grace; gloriously exalted on the account of his grace, and for the dispensation of it. To the saints above, he is on the throne of grace, in that they are in the full enjoyment of the effects of his grace, and do give glory unto him on the account thereof. He is so also with respect unto the church here below, in the continual communications of grace and mercy through Christ.

3dly. The Lord Christ, in his human nature, is before the throne, acting his mediatory office and power in behalf of the church.

4thly. All the holy angels in the various orders and degrees of their ministration, are about the throne continually. So,

5thly. Are the Spirits of just men made perfect, in the various measures of light and glory. And these things were obscurely represented in the order of the church at its first erection in the wilderness; for the ordinances of God among them were patterns or figures of heavenly things; Heb. ix. 23. (1st.) In the midst was the tabernacle or sanctuary which represented the sanctuary or temple above. (2dly.) In the most holy place, were the ark and mercy-seat representatives of the throne of grace. (3dly.) The ministry of the high-priest, a type of the ministry of Christ. (4thly.) The Levites who attended on the priest, did represent the ministry of angels, attending on Christ in the discharge of his office. And, (5thly.) round about them were the tribes in their order.

[2.] In the full, clear apprehensions which all the blessed ones have of the glory of God in Christ, of the work and

effects of his wisdom and grace towards mankind. These are the foundation of all divine worship. And because our conceptions and apprehensions about them, are dark, low, obscure, and inevident, our worship is weak and imperfect also. But all is open unto the saints above. We are in the dust, the blood, the noise of the battle; they are victoriously at peace, and have a perfect view of what they have passed through, and what they have attained unto. They are come to the springs of life and light, and are filled with admiration of the grace of God in themselves and one another. What they see in God, and in Jesus Christ, what they have experience of in themselves, what they know and learn from others, are all of them inconceivable and inexpressible. It is well for us, if we have so much experience of these things, as to see a real glory in the fulness and perfection of them. The apprehensions by sight without mixture of unsteadiness or darkness, without the allay of fears or temptations, with an ineffable sense of the things themselves on their hearts or minds, are the springs or motives of the holy worship which is in heaven.

[3.] In the glorious manner of the performance of it. Now whereas it ariseth from sight and present enjoyment, it must consist in a continual ascription of glory and praise unto God; and so it is described in the Scripture; see Rev. iv. 9—11. with Isa. vi. 3. And how little a portion of the glory of these things is it, that we can apprehend.

3. In this solemn assembly before the throne of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ, the great high-priest, doth represent and render acceptable unto God, the worship of the church here below. So it is expressed, Rev. viii. 3, 4. 'And an angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne; and the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up unto God out of the angel's hand.' It is a representation of the high-priest burning incense on the golden altar on the day of atonement, when he entered into the most holy place. For that altar was placed just at the entrance of it, directly before the ark and mercy-seat, representing the throne of God. This angel therefore is our high-priest; none else

could approach that altar, or offer incense on it, the smoke whereof was to enter into the holy place. And the 'prayers of all saints' is a synecdochical expression of the whole worship of the church. And this is presented before the throne of God, by this high-priest. And it is not said that their prayers came unto the throne of God, but the smoke of the incense out of the hand of the angel did so. For it is the incense of the intercession of Christ alone that gives them their acceptance with God. Without this, none of our prayers, praises, or thanksgivings, would ever have access into the presence of God, or unto the throne of grace. Blessed be God for this relief, under the consideration of the weakness and imperfection of them. Wherefore in him and by him alone, do we represent all our desires, and prayers, and whole worship to God. And herein, in all our worship do we ourselves 'enter into the most holy place;' Heb. x. 19. We do it not merely by faith, but by this especial exercise of it, in putting our prayers into the hand of this high-priest.

There are three things in all our worship that would hinder its access unto God, and acceptance with him, as also keep off comfort and peace from our consciences. The first is the sin or iniquity that cleaves unto it; secondly, the weakness or imperfection [illegible] and thirdly, the unworthiness of the persons by whom it is performed. With reference unto these things the law could never consummate or perfect the consciences of them that came unto God by the sacrifices of it. But there are three things in the sacerdotal ministration of Christ, that [illegible] and takes them all away, whereon we have access with [illegible] into God. And they are [illegible] (2. The efficacy of his intercession [illegible] The dignity of his person [illegible] [illegible] of God [illegible] —38. [illegible] his [illegible] Through the [illegible] gives acceptance [illegible] worship, with power [illegible]

whose smoke or sweet perfume comes up with the prayers of all saints unto the throne of God. Through the third, or the dignity of his person, wherein he appears as the representative of his whole mystical body, he takes away from our consciences that sense of our own vileness and unworthiness, which would not suffer us to approach with boldness unto the throne of grace. In these things consists the life of the worship of the church, of all believers, without which as it would not be acceptable unto God, so we could have neither peace nor consolation in it ourselves.

4. Herein hath the church that is triumphant, communion with that which is yet militant. The assembly above have not lost their concernment in the church here below. As we rejoice in their glory, safety, and happiness, that having passed through the storms and tempests, the temptations, sufferings, and dangers of this life and world, as they are harboured in eternal glory unto the praise of God in Christ; so are they full of affections towards their brethren exercised with the same temptations, difficulties, and dangers, which they have passed through, with earnest desires for their deliverance and safety. Wherefore when they behold the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great high-priest over the house of God, presenting their prayers, with all their holy worship unto him, rendering them acceptable by the incense of his own intercession, it fills them with satisfaction, and continually excites them unto the assignation of praise, and glory, and honour unto him. This is the state of the saints above, with respect unto the church here below. This is all which may be herein ascribed unto them, and this may safely be so. What some have fancied about their own personal intercession, and that for particular persons, is derogatory unto the honour of Jesus Christ, and inconsistent with their present condition. But in these things consist their communion with the church here below. A love they have unto it, from their union with it in the same mystical body; Eph. i. 10. A sense they have of its condition from the experience they had of it in the days of their flesh. A great concernment they have for the glory of God in them, and a fervent desire of their eternal salvation. They know that without them they shall not be absolutely consummate or made perfect in their whole persons; Rev. vi. 11. In this state

of things, they continually behold the Lord Jesus Christ, presenting their prayers before the throne of grace, making intercession for them, appearing to plead their cause against all their adversaries, transacting all their affairs in the presence of God, taking care of their salvation that not one of them shall perish. This continually fills them with a holy satisfaction and complacency, and is a great part of the subject matter of their incessant praises and ascriptions of glory unto him. Herein lies the concernment of the church above in that here below; this is the communion that is between them, whereof the person of Christ in the discharge of his office is the bond and centre.

5. There is herein a full manifestation made of the wisdom of God, in all the holy institutions of the tabernacle and temple of old. Herein the veil is fully taken off from them, and that obscure representation of heavenly things is brought forth unto light and glory. It is true, this is done unto a great degree in the dispensation of the gospel. By the coming of Christ in the flesh, and the discharge of his mediatory office in this world, the substance of what they did prefigure is accomplished. And in the revelations of the gospel, the nature and end of them is declared. Howbeit they extended their signification also unto things within the veil, or the discharge of the priestly office of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary; Heb. ix. 24. Wherefore, as we have not yet a perfection of light to understand the depth of the mysteries contained in them; so themselves also were not absolutely fulfilled until the Lord Christ discharged his office in the holy place. This is the glory of the pattern which God shewed unto Moses in the mount, made conspicuous and evident unto all. Therein especially do the saints of the Old Testament, who were exercised all their days in those typical institutions, whose end and design they could not comprehend, see the manifold wisdom and goodness of God in them all, rejoicing in them for evermore.

6. All that the Lord Christ receives of the Father on the account of this holy interposition and mediation for the church, he is endowed with sovereign authority and almighty power in himself to execute and accomplish. Therefore is he said, as a priest, to be 'made higher than the

heavens,' and as a 'priest to sit down at the right hand of the majesty on high;' Heb. viii. 2. This glorious power doth not immediately belong unto him on the account of his sacerdotal office, but it is that qualification of his person which is necessary unto the effectual discharge of it. Hence it is said of him, that he should 'bear the glory, and sit and rule upon his throne, and should be a priest upon his throne;' Zech. vi. 13. A throne is *insigne regium*, and properly belongs unto Christ with respect unto his kingly office; Heb. i. 8, 9. Howbeit the power accompanying and belonging unto his throne, being necessary unto the effectual discharge of his priestly office, as he sits and rules on his throne, so it is said that he is a 'priest on his throne' also.

This is one instance of the present state of Christ in heaven, and of the work which he doth there perform, and the only instance I shall insist upon. He was made a priest 'after the power of an endless life,' the life which he now leads in heaven; and 'lives for ever to make intercession for us.' He was dead, but is alive, and lives for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and death, all power over the enemies of his church. God on a throne of grace; Christ the high-priest, so on his right hand in glory and power, as yet to be 'before the throne' in the virtue of his sacerdotal office, with the whole concernment of the church on his hand, transacting all things with God for them: all the holy angels, and the 'spirits of just men made perfect' encompassing the throne with continual praises unto God, even the Father and him, on the account of the work of infinite wisdom, goodness, and grace, in his incarnation, mediation, and salvation of the church thereby; himself continuing to manage the cause of the whole church before God, presenting all their prayers and services unto him, perfumed with his own intercession, is that resemblance of heaven and its present glory, which the Scripture offers unto us. But alas how weak, how dark, how low, are our conceptions and apprehensions of these heavenly things? we see yet as through a glass darkly, and know but in part. The time is approaching when we shall see these things with open face, and know even as we are known. The best improvement we can make of this prospect, whilst faith supplies the

place of future sight, is to be stirred up thereby unto holy longings after a participation in this glory, and constant diligence in that holy obedience whereby we may arrive thereunto.

What remaineth yet to be spoken on this subject, hath respect unto these two ensuing propositions:

(1.) All the effects of the offices of Christ, internal, spiritual, and eternal, in grace and glory; all external fruits of their dispensation in providence towards the church, or its enemies, are wrought by divine power; or are the effects of an emanation of power from God. They are all wrought 'by the exceeding greatness of his power, even as he wrought in Christ himself when he raised him from the dead;' Eph. i. 18. For all the outward works of God, such as all these are, which are wrought in and for the church, are necessarily immediate effects of divine power; nor can be of another nature.

(2.) Upon supposition of the obedience of Christ in this life, and the atonement made by his blood for sin, with his exaltation thereon, there is nothing in any essential property of the nature of God, nothing in the eternal, unchangeable law of obedience to hinder, but that God might work all these things in us unto his own honour and glory, in the eternal salvation of the church, and the destruction of all its enemies, without a continuance of the administration of the offices of Christ in heaven, and all that sacred solemnity of worship, wherewith it is accompanied.

These things being certain and evident, we may inquire thereon, whence it is that God hath ordered the continuation of all these things in heaven above, seeing these ends might have been accomplished without them, by immediate acts of divine power.

The great 'works of God are sought out of them that have pleasure in them;' Psal. cxi. 2. This therefore being a great work of God, which he hath wrought and revealed unto us, especially in the effects and fruits of it, and that for the manifestation of his wisdom and grace, it is our duty to inquire into it with all humble diligence. 'For revealed things belong unto us and our children, that we may do the will of God for our good.' Wherefore,

[1.] God would have it so, for the manifestation of his

own glory. This is the first great end of all the works of God. That it is so, is a fundamental principle of our religion. And how his works do glorify him, is our duty to inquire. The essential glory of God is always the same, eternal and immutable. It is the being of God, with that respect which all creatures have unto it. For glory adds a supposition of relation unto being. But the manifestations of his glory are various, according to the pleasure of his will. Wherefore, that which he chooseth to manifest his glory in and by at one time, he may cease from using it unto that end at another. For its being a means of the manifestation of his glory, may depend on such circumstances, such a state of things, which being removed, it ceaseth to be. So of old he manifested and represented his glory in the tabernacle and temple, and the holy pledges of his presence in them, and was glorified in all the worship of the law. But now he ceaseth so to do, nor is any more honoured by the services and ceremonies of religion therein prescribed. If the whole structure of the temple, and all its beautiful services, were now in being on the earth, no glory would redound unto God thereby, he would receive none from it. To expect the glory of God in them would be a high dishonour unto him. And God may at any time begin to manifest his glory, by such ways and means as he did not formerly make use of unto that purpose. So is it with all gospel ordinances, which state will be continued unto the consummation of all things here below, and no longer, for then shall they all cease, God will be no more glorified in them or by them. So hath God chosen to glorify himself in heaven by this administration of all things in and by Jesus Christ, whereunto also there is an end determined.

And in the continuation of this holy worship in the sanctuary above, God doth manifest his glory on many accounts, and resteth therein.

1st. He doth it in and unto the saints who departed this life under the Old Testament. They came short in glory of what they now enter into, who die in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. For, not to dispute about, nor determine positively, what was their state and condition before the ascension of Christ into heaven, or what was the nature of the blessed receptacle of their souls; it is manifest that they

did not, they could not behold the glory of God, and the accomplishment of the mystery of his wisdom and will, in Jesus Christ, nor was it perfectly made known unto them. Whatever was their rest, refreshment, and blessedness; whatever were their enjoyments of the presence of God; yet was there no throne of grace erected in heaven, no high-priest appearing before it; no Lamb as it had been slain, no joint ascription of glory unto him that sits on the throne, and the Lamb for ever; God 'having ordained some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.' See Eph. iii. 9, 10.

This was that, and this was that alone, so far as in the Scripture it is revealed, wherein they came short of that glory which is now enjoyed in heaven. And herein consists the advantage of the saints above them, who now die in faith. Their state in heaven was suited unto their faith and worship on the earth. They had no clear distinct knowledge of the incarnation and mediatory office of Christ, by their revelations and services. Only they believed that the promise of deliverance, of grace and mercy, should be in and by him accomplished. Their reception into heaven, that which they were made meet and prepared for by their faith and worship, was suited thereunto. They had a blessed rest and happiness above what we can comprehend; for who knows what it is to be in the glorious presence of God, though at the greatest distance? They were not immediately surprised with an appearance of that glory which they had no distinct apprehensions of in this world. Neither they nor the angels knew clearly either the sufferings of Christ, or the glory that should ensue. But they saw and knew that there was yet something farther to be done in heaven and earth, as yet hid in God and the counsels of his will, for the exaltation of his glory in the complete salvation of the church. This they continued waiting for, in the holy place of their refreshment above. Faith gave them, and it gives us, an entrance into the presence of God, and makes us meet for it. But what they immediately enjoyed, did not in its whole kind exceed what their faith directed unto; no more doth ours. Wherefore they were not prepared for a view of the present glory of heaven; nor did enjoy it. But the saints under the New Testament, who are clearly instructed

by the gospel in the mysteries of the incarnation and mediation of Christ, are by their faith and worship made meet for an immediate entrance into this glory. This they long for, this they expect and are secured of, from the prayer of our Saviour; that they be, when they leave this world, where he is, to behold his glory.

But now upon the entrance of Christ into the heavenly sanctuary, all those holy ones were admitted into the same glory, with what the saints under the New Testament do enjoy. Hereon with open face they behold the use and end of those typical services and ordinances wherein these things were shadowed out unto them. No heart can conceive that ineffable addition of glory which they received hereby. The mystery of the wisdom and grace of God in their redemption and salvation by Christ was now fully represented unto them; what they had prayed for, longed for, and desired to see in the days of their flesh on the earth, and waited for so long in heaven, was now gloriously made manifest unto them. Hereon did glorious light and blessed satisfaction come into and upon all those blessed souls, who died in the faith, but had not received the promise, only beheld it afar off. And hereby did God greatly manifest his own glory in them and unto them, which is the first end of the continuation of this state of things in heaven. This makes me judge that the season of Christ's entrance into heaven as the holy sanctuary of God, was the greatest instance of created glory, that ever was or ever shall be unto the consummation of all things. And this as for other reasons, so because all the holy souls who had departed in the faith from the foundation of the world, were then received into the glorious light of the counsels of God, and knowledge of the effects of his grace by Jesus Christ.

Want of a due apprehension of the truth herein, hath caused many, especially those of the church of Rome, to follow after vain imaginations about the state of the souls of the faithful, departed under the Old Testament. Generally they shut them up in a subterranean *limbus*, whence they were delivered by the descent of Christ. But it is contrary unto all notions and revelations of the respect of God unto his people: contrary to the life and nature of faith, that those who have passed through their course of obe-

dience in this world, and finished the work given unto them, should not enter upon their departure into blessed rest in the presence of God. Take away the persuasion hereof, and the whole nature of faith is destroyed. But into the fulness of present glory they could not be admitted, as hath been declared.

Moreover, God hereby manifests his glory unto the holy angels themselves. These things wherein it doth consist were hid in himself even from them, from the foundation of the world; hidden in the holy counsels of his will; Eph. iii. 9. Wherefore unto these 'principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God was made known by the church;' ver. 10. The church being redeemed by the blood of Christ, and himself thereon exalted in this glory, they came to know the 'manifold wisdom of God,' by the effects of it, which before they earnestly desired to look into; 1 Pet. i. 12. Hereby is all the glory of the counsels of God in Christ made conspicuous unto them; and they receive themselves no small advancement in glory thereby. For in the present comprehension of the mind of God, and doing of his will, doth their blessedness consist.

Heaven itself was not what it is, before the entrance of Christ into the sanctuary for the administration of his office. Neither the saints departed, nor the angels themselves, were participant of that glory which now they are. Neither yet doth this argue any defect in heaven, or the state thereof in its primitive constitution. For the perfection of any state hath respect unto that order of things which it is originally suited unto. Take all things in the order of the first creation, and with respect thereunto, heaven was perfect in glory from the beginning. Howbeit there was still a relation and regard in it unto the church of mankind on the earth, which was to be translated thither. But by the entrance of sin, all this order was disturbed, and all this relation was broken. And there followed thereon an imperfection in the state of heaven itself; for it had no longer a relation unto, or communion with, them on earth, nor was a receptacle meet for men who were sinners to be received into. Wherefore by the blood of the cross, God 'reconciled all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven;' Col. i. 20. Or gathered all things into one in him, 'both

which are in heaven, and which are in the earth;' Eph. i. 10. Even the things in heaven, so far stood in need of a reconciliation, as that they might be gathered together in one, with the things on earth; the glory whereof is manifested in this heavenly ministration. And the apostle affirms that the 'heavenly things themselves were purified by the sacrifice of Christ;' Heb. ix. 23. Not that they were actually defiled in themselves, but without this purification they were not meet for the fellowship of this mystery in the joint-worship of the whole society in heaven and earth, by Jesus Christ. Hence, therefore, there is a continual manifestation of the glory of God unto the angels themselves. They behold his manifold wisdom and grace in the blessed effects of it, which were treasured up in the holy counsels of his will from eternity. Hereby is their own light and blessedness advanced, and they are filled with admirations of God, ascribing praise, honour, and glory unto him for evermore. For the beholding of the mystery of the wisdom of God in Christ, which is here so despised in the dispensation of the gospel, is the principal part of the blessedness of the angels in heaven, which fills them with eternal delight, and is the ground of their ascribing praise and glory unto him for evermore.

This is that manifestative glory wherewith God satisfieth himself, until the end determined shall be. On the account hereof he doth and will bear with things in this world, unto the appointed season. For whilst the creation is in its present posture, a revenue of glory must be taken out of it for God, and longer than that is done it cannot be continued. But the world is so full of darkness and confusion, of sin and wickedness, of enmity against God, is so given up to villany, unto all the ways whereby God may be dishonoured, that there is little or no appearance of any revenue of glory unto him from it. Were it not on the secret account of divine wisdom, it would quickly receive the end of Sodom and Gomorrah. The small remnant of the inheritance of Christ, is shut up in such obscurity, that as unto visible appearance and manifestation, it is no way to be laid in the balance against the dishonour that is done unto him by the whole world. But whilst things are in this posture here below, God hath a solemn honour, glory, and worship above in the presence of all his holy ones, wherein he resteth and takes plea-

sure. In his satisfaction herein, he will continue things in this world unto all the ends of his wisdom, goodness, righteousness, and patience, let it rage in villany and wickedness as it pleaseth. And so when any of the saints who are wearied and even worn out with the state of things in this world, and it may be understand not the grounds of the patience of God, do enter into this state, they shall unto their full satisfaction behold that glory which abundantly compensates the present dishonour done to God here below.

[2.] This state of things is continued 'for the glory of Christ himself.' The office of mediator was committed by God the Father unto his only-begotten Son, no other being able to bear or discharge it. See Isa. vi. 9. Rev. v. 1—6. But in the discharge of this office it was necessary he should condescend unto a mean and low condition, and to undergo things difficult, hard, and terrible; Phil. ii. 6—8. Such were the things which our Lord Jesus Christ underwent in this world; his undergoing of them being necessary unto the discharge of his office; yea, it consisted therein. Herein was he exposed unto reproach, contempt, and shame, with all the evils that Satan or the world could bring upon him. And besides, he was for us, and in our stead, to undergo the 'curse of the law,' with the greatest of terrors and sorrows in his soul, until he gave up the ghost. These things were necessary unto the discharge of his office, nor could the salvation of the church be wrought out without them. But do we think that God would commit so glorious an office unto his only Son to be discharged in this manner only? Let it be granted that after he had so accomplished the will of God in this world, he had himself entered into glory; yet if he should so cease the administration of his office, that must be looked on as the most afflictive and dolorous that ever was undergone. But it was the design of God to glorify the office itself, as an effect of his wisdom, and himself therein; yea, so as that the very office itself should be an everlasting honour to his Son as incarnate. Unto this end the administration of it is continued in glory in his hand, and he is exalted in the discharge of it. For this is that glory which he prays that all his disciples may be brought unto him to behold. The time between his ascension, and the end of all things is allotted unto the glory of Christ in the administra-

tion of his office in the heavenly sanctuary. And from hence doth the apostle prove him 'as a high-priest,' to be far more glorious than those who were called unto that office under the law; Heb. viii. 1—3. Herein it is manifest unto angels and men, how glorious a thing it is to be the only king, priest, and prophet of the church. Wherefore, as it behoved Christ in the discharge of his office to suffer; so after his sufferings in the discharge of the same office he was to enter into his glory; Rev. i. 18.

[3.] God hath respect herein unto those who depart in the faith, in their respective generations, especially those who died betimes, as the apostles and primitive Christians. And sundry things may be herein considered.

1st. There are two things which believers put a great price and value on in this world, and which sweeten every condition unto them. Without them the world would be a noisome dungeon unto them, nor could they be satisfied with a continuance therein. The one is the service of Christ. Without an opportunity of being exercised herein, they could not abide here with any satisfaction. They who know it not so to be, are under the power of worldly-mindedness. The meanest service of Christ hath refreshment in it. And as to those who have opportunities and abilities for great instances of service, they do not know on just grounds, nor are able to determine themselves, whether it be best for them to continue in their service here below, or to enter into the immediate service of Christ above; so glorious, so excellent is it to be usefully serviceable unto the Lord Jesus. So was it with the apostle, Phil. i. 21—26. so may it be with others, if they serve him in the same spirit, with the same sincerity, though their ability in service be not like unto his. For neither had he any thing but what he received. Again, they have the enjoyment of Christ in the ordinances of gospel worship. By these means do they live, in these things is the life of their souls.

In this state of things God will not call them hence unto their loss; he will not put an end unto these privileges without an abundant recompense and advantage. Whatever we enjoy here, yet still to depart hence and to be with Christ shall be far better; Phil. i. 23. For,

(1st.) Although service here below shall cease, and be

tend themselves even unto that condition of unworthiness, which was enough to render them utterly disowned by the best of men, however otherwise concerned in them. But to suppose the church above, which hath passed through its course of faith and obedience in afflictions, tribulations, and persecutions, to be ignorant of the state of the church here below, in general, and unconcerned in it; to be without desires of its success, deliverance, and prosperity unto the glory of Christ, is to lay them asleep in a senseless state, without the exercise of any grace, or any interest in the glory of God. And if they 'cry for vengeance' on the obdurate persecuting world, Rev. vi. 10. shall we suppose they have no consideration nor knowledge of the state of the church suffering the same things which they did themselves. And to put it out of question, they are minded of it in the next verse by Christ himself; ver. 11.

But that which at present I alone intend, is the joint communion of the whole church in the worship of God in Christ. Were all that die in the Lord, immediately received into that state wherein God 'shall be all in all,' without any use of the mediation of Christ, or the worship of praise and honour given unto God by him, without being exercised in the ascription of honour, glory, power, and dominion unto him on the account of the past and present discharge of his office, there could be no communion between them and us. But whilst they are in the sanctuary, in the temple of God, in the holy worship of Christ, and of God in him, and we are not only employed in the same work in sacred ordinances suited unto our state and condition, but in the performance of our duties, do by faith 'enter in within the veil,' and approach unto the same throne of grace in the most holy place, there is a spiritual communion between them and us. So the apostle expresseth it, Heb. xii. 22—24.

3dly. It is the way that God hath appointed to prepare the holy souls above for the enjoyment of that eternal state which shall ensue at the end of all things. As we are here, in and by the word and other ordinances, prepared and made meet for the present state of things in glory, so are they by the temple worship of heaven fitted for that state of things when Christ shall 'give up the kingdom unto the Father, that God may be all in all.'

[4.] Respect is had herein unto the faith of the church yet militant on the earth, and that among others in two things.

1st. For the encouragement of their faith. God could, as we have observed, upon the supposition of the atonement and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ, have saved the church by mere sovereign acts of power. But whereas it was unto his glory that we should be saved in the way of faith and obedience, this way was necessary unto our encouragement therein. For it is in the nature of faith, it is a grace suited unto that end, to seek for and receive aid, help, and relief, from God continually, to enable us unto obedience.

For this end the Lord Christ continueth in the discharge of his office, whereby he is able to save us unto the uttermost, that we may receive such supplies by and from him. The continual use that faith makes of Christ unto this purpose, as he gloriously exerciseth his mediatory office and power in heaven, cannot fully be declared. Neither can any believer who is acted by present gospel light and grace, conceive how the life of faith can be led or preserved without it. No duties are we called unto, no temptations are we exercised withal, no sufferings do we undergo, no difficulties, dangers, fears, have we to conflict withal, nothing is there in life or death, wherein the glory of God or our own spiritual welfare is concerned, but faith finds and takes relief and encouragement, in the present mediatory life and power of Christ in heaven, with the exercise of his love, care, and compassion therein. So he proposeth himself unto our faith, Rev. i. 17, 18.

2dly. That our faith may be guided and directed in all our accesses unto God in his holy worship. Were nothing proposed unto us but the immensity of the divine essence, we should not know how to make our approaches unto it. And thence it is that those who are unacquainted with the glory of this dispensation, who know not how to make use of Christ in his present state for an access unto God, are always inventing ways of their own (as by saints, angels, images) for that end; for an immediate access unto the divine essence they cannot fancy. Wherefore, to end this discourse in one word; all the present faith and worship of God in the

church here on earth, all access unto him for grace, and all acceptable ascriptions of glory unto his divine majesty, do all of them in their being and exercise, wholly depend on, and are resolved into, the continuation of the mediatory actings of Christ in heaven and glory.

I shall close this discourse with a little review of somewhat that passed before. From the consideration of that place of the apostle, wherein he affirms, 'that at the end, Christ shall give up the kingdom unto the Father,' I declared that all the state of things which we have described, shall then cease, and all things issue in the immediate enjoyment of God himself. I would extend this no farther than as unto what concerneth the exercise of Christ's mediatory office with respect unto the church here below, and the enemies of it. But there are some things which belong unto the essence of this state which shall continue unto all eternity; as,

1st. I do believe that the person of Christ, in and by his human nature, shall be for ever the immediate head of the whole glorified creation. God having gathered all things unto a head in him, the knot or centre of that collection shall never be dissolved. We shall never lose our relation unto him; nor he his unto us.

2dly. I do therefore also believe, that he shall be the means and way of communication between God and his glorified saints for ever. What are, what will be the glorious communications of God unto his saints for ever, in life, light, power, joy, rest, and ineffable satisfaction (as all must be from him unto eternity), I shall not now inquire. But this I say, they shall be all made in and through the person of the Son, and the human nature therein. That tabernacle shall never be folded up, never be laid aside as useless. And if it be said, that I cannot declare the way and manner of the eternal communications of God himself unto his saints in glory by Christ; I shall only say, that I cannot declare the way and manner of his communications of himself in grace by Christ unto the souls of men in this world, and yet I do believe it. How much more must we satisfy ourselves with the evidence of faith alone in those things, which as yet, are more incomprehensible. And our adherence unto God, by love and delight, shall always be

through Christ. For God will be conceived of unto eternity, according to the manifestation that he hath made of himself, in him, and no otherwise. This shall not be by acting faith with respect unto the actual exercise of the mediation of Christ, as now we cleave unto God; but it shall be by the all-satisfying acting of love unto God, as he hath manifested himself, and will manifest himself in Christ.

3dly. The person of Christ, and therein his human nature, shall be the eternal object of divine glory, praise, and worship. The life of glory is not a mere state of contemplation. Vision is the principle of it, as faith is of the life of grace. Love is the great vital acting of that principle, in adherence unto God with eternal delight. But this is active in it also. It shall be exercised in the continual ascription and assignation of glory, praise, and honour unto God, and the glorious exercise of all sorts of grace therein; hereof the Lamb, the person of Christ, is the eternal object with that of the Father and the Spirit; the human nature in the Son, admitted into the communion of the same eternal glory.

MEDITATIONS AND DISCOURSES

ON THE

GLORY OF CHRIST,

IN HIS

PERSON, OFFICE, AND GRACE:

WITH

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH AND SIGHT; APPLIED UNTO THE USE OF THEM THAT BELIEVE.

PREFACE TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

THE design of the ensuing Discourse, is to declare some part of that glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is revealed in the Scripture, and proposed as the principal object of our faith, love, delight, and admiration. But alas! after our utmost and most diligent inquiries, we must say, how little a portion is it of him that we can understand! His glory is incomprehensible, and his praises are unutterable. Some things an illuminated mind may conceive of it; but what we can express in comparison of what it is in itself, is even less than nothing. But as for those who have forsaken the only true guide herein, endeavouring to be wise above what is written, and to raise their contemplations by fancy and imagination above Scripture revelation (as many have done), they have darkened counsel without knowledge, uttering things which they understand not, which have no substance or spiritual food of faith in them.

Howbeit, that real view which we may have of Christ and his glory in this world by faith, however weak and obscure that knowledge which we may attain of them by divine revelation, is inexpressibly to be preferred above all other wisdom, understanding, or knowledge whatever. So it is declared by him, who will be acknowledged a competent judge in these things; 'Yea doubtless' (saith he), 'I account

all these things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' He who doth not so, hath no part in him.

The revelation made of Christ in the blessed gospel, is far more excellent, more glorious, and more filled with rays of divine wisdom and goodness, than the whole creation; and the just comprehension of it, if attainable, can contain or afford. Without the knowledge hereof, the mind of man, however priding itself in other inventions and discoveries, is wrapped up in darkness and confusion.

This, therefore, deserves the severest of our thoughts, the best of our meditations, and our utmost diligence in them. For if our future blessedness shall consist in being where he is, and beholding of his glory; what better preparation can there be for it, than in a constant previous contemplation of that glory in the revelation that is made in the gospel, unto this very end, that by a view of it, we may be gradually transformed into the same glory.

I shall not, therefore, use any apology for the publishing of the ensuing meditations, intended first for the exercise of my own mind, and then for the edification of a private congregation, which is like to be the last service I shall do them in that kind. Some may by the consideration of them be called to attend unto the same duty with more diligence than formerly, and receive directions for the discharge of it; and some may be provoked to communicate their greater light and knowledge unto the good of many. And that which I design farther in the present Discourse, is to give a brief account of the necessity and use, in life and death, of the duty exhorted unto.

Particular motives unto the diligent discharge of this duty, will be pressed in the Discourse itself. Here some things more general only shall be premised.

For all persons not immersed in sensual pleasures, not overdrenched in the love of this world, and present things, who have any generous or noble thoughts about their own nature, being, and end, are under the highest obligation to betake themselves unto this contemplation of Christ and his glory. Without this they shall never attain true rest or satisfaction in their own minds. He it is alone in whom the race of mankind may boast and glory, on whom all its felicities do depend. For,

1. He it is in whom our nature, which was debased as low as hell by apostacy from God, is exalted above the whole creation. Our nature, in the original constitution of it, in the persons of our first parents, was crowned with honour and dignity. The image of God wherein it was made, and the dominion over the lower world wherewith it was intrusted, made it the seat of excellency, of beauty, and of glory. But of them all it was at once divested and made naked by sin, and laid grovelling in the dust from whence it was taken. 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return,' was its righteous doom. And all its internal faculties were invaded by deformed lusts; every thing that might render the whole unlike unto God, whose image it had lost. Hence it became the contempt of angels, the dominion of Satan, who being the enemy of the whole creation, never had any thing or place to reign in, but the debased nature of man. Nothing was now more vile and base, its glory was utterly departed. It had both lost its peculiar nearness unto God, which was its honour, and was fallen into the greatest distance from him of all creatures, the devils only excepted, which was its ignominy and shame. And in this state, as unto any thing in itself, it was left to perish eternally.

In this condition, lost, poor, base, yea, cursed, the Lord Christ the Son of God found our nature. And hereon, in infinite condescension and compassion, sanctifying a portion of it unto himself, he took it to be his own in a holy, ineffable subsistence, in his own person. And herein again the same nature, so depressed into the utmost misery, is exalted above the whole creation of God. For in that very nature, God hath 'set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.' This is that which is so celebrated by the psalmist, with the highest admiration, Psal. viii. 3—8. This is the greatest privilege we have among all our fellow-creatures; this we may glory in, and value ourselves upon. Those who engage this nature on the service of sensual lusts and pleasures, who think that its felicity and utmost capacities consist in their satisfaction with the accomplishment of other earthly temporary desires, are satisfied with it in its state of apostacy from God. But those who have received the light of faith and grace; so as rightly to understand the being and end of that nature whereof they are partakers, cannot but rejoice in its deliverance from the utmost debasement into that glorious exaltation, which it hath received in the person of Christ. And this must needs make thoughts of him full of refreshment unto their souls. Let us take care of our persons; the glory of our nature is safe in him. For,

2. In him the relation of our nature unto God, is eternally secured. We were created in a covenant relation unto God. Our nature was related unto him in a way of friendship, of likeness, and complacency. But the bond of this relation and

union was quickly broken by our apostacy from him. Hereon our whole nature became to be at the utmost moral distance from God, and enmity against him, which is the depth of misery. But God, in infinite wisdom and grace, did design once more to recover it, and take it again near unto himself. And he would do it in such a way, as should render it utterly impossible that there should ever be a separation between him and it any more. Heaven and earth may pass away, but there shall never be a dissolution of the union between God and our nature any more. He did it, therefore, by assuming it into a substantial union with himself, in the person of the Son. Hereby the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in it bodily, or substantially, and eternally. Hereby is its relation unto God eternally secured. And among all the mysterious excellencies which relate hereunto, there are two which continually present themselves unto our consideration.

1. That this nature of ours, is capable of this glorious exaltation and subsistence in God. No creature could conceive how omnipotent wisdom, power, and goodness, could actuate themselves unto the production of this effect. The mystery hereof, is the object of the admiration of angels, and will be so of the whole church, unto all eternity. What is revealed concerning the glory, way, and manner of it, in the Scripture, I have declared in my treatise concerning the mystery of godliness, or the person of Christ. What mind can conceive, what tongue can express, who can sufficiently admire the wisdom, goodness, and condescension of God herein! And whereas he hath proposed unto us this glorious object of our faith and meditation, how vile and foolish are we, if we spend our thoughts about other things in a neglect of it!

2. This is also an ineffable pledge of the love of God unto our nature. For although he will not take it in any other instance, save that of the man Christ Jesus, into this relation with himself, by virtue of personal union; yet therein he hath given a glorious pledge of his love unto, and valuation of, that nature. For 'verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.' And this kindness extends unto our persons, as participant of that nature. For he designed this glory unto the man Christ Jesus, that he might be the first-born of the new creation, that we might be made conformable unto him according to our measure; and as the members of that body, whereof he is the head, we are participant in this glory.

3. It is he, in whom our nature hath been carried successfully, and victoriously, through all the oppositions that it is liable unto, and even death itself. But the glory hereof I shall speak unto distinctly in its proper place, which follows, and therefore shall here pass it by.

4. He it is, who in himself hath given us a pledge of the capacity of our nature to inhabit those blessed regions of light, which are far above these aspectable heavens. Here we dwell in tabernacles of clay, that are 'crushed before the moth;' such as cannot be raised, so as to abide one foot-breadth above the earth we tread upon. The heavenly luminaries which we can behold, appear too great and glorious for our cohabitation. We are as grasshoppers in our own eyes, in comparison of those gigantic beings; and they seem to dwell in places, which would immediately swallow up, and extinguish our natures. How then shall we entertain an apprehension of being carried and exalted above them all? to have an everlasting subsistence in places incomprehensibly

more glorious than the orbs wherein they reside? What capacity is there in our nature of such a habitation? But hereof the Lord Christ hath given us a pledge in himself. Our nature in him, is passed through these aspectable heavens, and is exalted far above them. Its eternal habitation is in the blessed regions of light and glory; and he hath promised that where he is, there we shall be, and that for ever.

Other encouragements there are innumerable to stir us up unto diligence in the discharge of the duty here proposed; namely, a continual contemplation of the glory of Christ in his person, office, and grace. Some of them, the principal of them, which I have any acquaintance with, are represented in the ensuing Discourse. I shall, therefore, here add the peculiar advantage which we may obtain in the diligent discharge of this duty. Which is, that it will carry us cheerfully, comfortably, and victoriously, through life and death, and all that we have to conflict withal in either of them.

And let it be remembered, that I do here suppose what is written on this subject in the ensuing Discourse, as being designed to prepare the minds of the readers for the due improvement of it.

As unto this present life, it is well known what it is unto the most of them, who concern themselves in these things. Temptations, afflictions, changes, sorrows, dangers, fears, sickness, and pains, do fill up no small part of it. And on the other hand, all our earthly relishes, refreshments, and comforts, are uncertain, transitory, and unsatisfactory; all things of each sort being imbittered by the remainders of sin. Hence every thing wherein we are concerned, hath the root of trouble and sorrow in it. Some labour under wants, poverty, and straits all their days; and some have very few hours free from pains and

sickness. And all these things, with others of an alike nature, are heightened at present, by the calamitous season wherein our lot is fallen. All things almost in all nations are filled with confusions, disorders, dangers, distresses, and troubles; wars and rumours of wars, do abound, with tokens of farther approaching judgments; 'distress of nations, with perplexities, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.' There is in many places 'no peace unto him that goeth out, nor to him that cometh in, but great vexations are on the inhabitants of the world; nation is destroyed of nation, and city of city, for God doth vex them with all adversity.' And in the mean time, vexation, with the ungodly deeds of wicked men, doth greatly farther the troubles of life; the sufferings of many also for the testimony of their consciences are deplorable, with the divisions and animosities that abound amongst all sorts of Christians.

But the shortness, the vanity, the miseries of human life, have been the subject of the complaints of all sorts of considering persons, heathens as well as Christians; nor is it my present business to insist upon them. My inquiry is only after the relief which we may obtain against all these evils, that we faint not under them, that we may have the victory over them.

This in general is declared by the apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. But for this cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a more exceed-

ing and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.'

Our beholding by faith things that are not seen, things spiritual and eternal, will alleviate all our afflictions, make their burden light, and preserve our souls from fainting under them. Of these things the glory of Christ whereof we treat, is the principal, and in a due sense comprehensive of them all. For we behold the 'glory of God himself, in the face of Jesus Christ.' He that can at all times retreat unto the contemplation of this glory, will be carried above the perplexing prevailing sense of any of these evils, of a confluence of them all. 'Crus nil sentit in nervo dum animus est in cœlo.'

It is a woful kind of life, when men scramble for poor perishing reliefs in their distresses. This is the universal remedy and cure, the only balsam for all our diseases. Whatever presseth, urgeth, perplexeth; if we can but retreat in our minds unto a view of this glory, and a due consideration of our own interest therein; comfort and supportment will be administered unto us. Wicked men in their distresses (which sometimes overtake even them also), are like 'a troubled sea that cannot rest.' Others are heartless and despond, not without secret repinings at the wise disposals of divine providence, especially when they look on the better condition (as they suppose) of others. And the best of us all are apt to wax faint and weary, when these things press upon us in an unusual manner, or under their long continuance, without a prospect of relief. This is the strong hold which such prisoners of hope are to turn themselves unto. In this contemplation of the

glory of Christ, they will find rest unto their own souls. For,

1. It will herein, and in the discharge of this duty, be made evident, how slight and inconsiderable all these things are from whence our troubles and distresses do arise. For they all grow on this root of an over-valuation of temporal things. And unless we can arrive unto a fixed judgment that all things here below are transitory and perishing, reaching only unto the outward man, or the body (perhaps unto the killing of it), that the best of them have nothing that is truly substantial or abiding in them; that there are other things wherein we have an assured interest, that are incomparably better than they, and above them, it is impossible but that we must spend our lives in fears, sorrows, and distractions. One real view of the glory of Christ, and of our own concernment therein, will give us a full relief in this matter. For what are all the things of this life; what is the good or evil of them, in comparison of an interest in this transcendent glory? When we have due apprehensions hereof, when our minds are possessed with thoughts of it, when our affections reach out after its enjoyments, let pain, and sickness, and sorrows, and fears, and dangers, and death, say what they will, we shall have in readiness wherewith to combat with them, and overcome them; and that on this consideration, that they are all outward, transitory, and passing away; whereas our minds are fixed on those things which are eternal, and filled with incomprehensible glory.

2. The minds of men are apt by their troubles to be cast into disorder, to be tossed up and down, and disquieted with various affections and passions. So the psalmist found it in himself, in the time of his

distress; whence he calls himself unto that account: 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?' And indeed, the mind on all such occasions, is its own greatest troubler. It is apt to let loose its passions of fear and sorrow, which act themselves in innumerable perplexing thoughts, until it is carried utterly out of its own power. But in this state a due contemplation of the glory of Christ, will restore and compose the mind, bring it into a sedate, quiet frame, wherein faith will be able to say unto the winds and waves of distempered passions, Peace, be still; and they shall obey it.

3. It is the way and means of conveying a sense of God's love unto our souls, which is that alone where ultimately we find rest in the midst of all the troubles of this life, as the apostle declares, Rom. v. 2—5. It is the Spirit of God, who alone communicates a sense of this love unto our souls; it is 'shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.' Howbeit, there are ways and means to be used on our part, whereby we may be disposed and made meet to receive these communications of divine love. Among these the principal is the contemplation of the glory of Christ insisted on, and of God the Father in him. It is the season, it is the way and means, at which and whereby the Holy Ghost will give a sense of the love of God unto us, causing us thereon to 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' This will be made evident in the ensuing discourse. This will lift the minds and hearts of believers above all the troubles of this life, and is the sovereign antidote that will expel all the poison that is in them, which otherwise might perplex and enslave their souls.

I have but touched on these things, as designing to enlarge somewhat on that which doth ensue. And this is the advantage we may have in the dis-

charge of this duty with respect unto death itself. It is the assiduous contemplation of the glory of Christ, which will carry us cheerfully and comfortably into it, and through it. My principal work having been now for a long season to die daily, as living in a continual expectation of my dissolution, I shall on this occasion acquaint the reader with some few of my thoughts and reliefs, with reference unto death itself.

There are sundry things required of us, that we may be able to encounter death cheerfully, constantly, and victoriously. For want of these, or some of them, I have known gracious souls, who have lived in a kind of bondage for fear of death all their days. We know not how God will manage any of our minds and souls in that season, in that trial. For he acts towards us in all such things, in a way of sovereignty. But these are the things which he requireth of us in a way of duty.

First, Peculiar actings of faith to resign and commit our departing souls into the hand of him, who is able to receive them, to keep and preserve them, as also to dispose of them into a state of rest and blessedness, are required of us.

The soul is now parting with all things here below, and that for ever. None of all the things which it hath seen, heard, or enjoyed, by its outward senses, can be prevailed with to stay with it one hour, or to take one step with it, in the voyage wherein it is engaged. It must alone by itself launch into eternity. It is entering an invisible world, which it knows no more of than it hath received by faith. None hath come from the dead to inform us of the state of the other world. Yea, God seems on purpose so to conceal it from us, that we should have no evidence of it, at least as unto the manner of things in it, but what is given unto faith by divine revelation. Hence those who died and

were raised again from the dead, unto any continuance among men, as Lazarus, probably knew nothing of the invisible state. Their souls were preserved by the power of God in their being, but bound up as unto present operations. This made a great emperor cry out on the approach of death; 'O animula, tremula, vagula, blandula; quæ nunc abibis in loca horrida, squalida,' &c. 'O poor, trembling, wandering soul, into what places of darkness and defilement art thou going!'

How is it like to be after the few moments, which under the pangs of death we have to continue in this world? Is it an annihilation that lies at the door? Is death the destruction of our whole being, so as that after it we shall be no more? So some would have the state of things to be. Is it a state of subsistence in a wandering condition, up and down the world, under the influence of other more powerful spirits that rule in the air, visiting tombs and solitary places, and sometimes making appearances of themselves by the impressions of those more powerful spirits, as some imagine from the story concerning Samuel and the witch of Endor, and as it is commonly received in the papacy, out of a compliance with their imagination of purgatory? Or is it a state of universal misery and woe? a state incapable of comfort or joy? Let them pretend what they please, who can understand no comfort or joy in this life, but what they receive by their senses, they can look for nothing else. And whatever be the state of this invisible world, the soul can undertake nothing of its own conduct after its departure from the body. It knows that it must be absolutely at the disposal of another.

Wherefore, no man can comfortably venture on and into this condition, but in the exercise of that faith, which enables him to resign and give up his departing soul into the hand of God, who alone is able

to receive it, and to dispose it into a condition of rest and blessedness. So speaks the apostle, 'I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day.'

Herein, as in all other graces, is our Lord Jesus Christ our great example. He resigned his departing spirit into the hands of his Father, to be owned and preserved by him, in its state of separation. 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit,' Luke xxiii. 46. as did the psalmist, his type, in an alike condition; Psal. xxxi. 5. But the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ herein, the object and exercise of it, what he believed and trusted unto, in this resignation of his spirit into the hand of God, is at large expressed in the sixteenth Psalm. 'I have,' said he, 'set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' He left his soul in the hand of God, in full assurance that it should suffer no evil in its state of separation, but should be brought again with his body into a blessed resurrection, and eternal glory. So Stephen resigned his soul, departing under violence, into the hands of Christ himself. When he died, he said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

This is the last victorious act of faith, wherein its conquest over its last enemy death itself doth consist. Herein the soul says, in and unto itself, Thou art now taking leave of time unto eternity; all things about thee are departing as shades, and will immediately disappear. The things which thou art entering into are

yet invisible; such as 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor will they enter into the heart of man fully to conceive.' Now, therefore, with quietness and confidence give up thyself unto the sovereign power, grace, truth, and faithfulness of God, and thou shalt find assured rest and peace.

But Jesus Christ it is, who doth immediately receive the souls of them who believe in him. So we see in the instance of Stephen. And what can be a greater encouragement to resign them into his hands, than a daily contemplation of his glory in his person, his power, his exaltation, his office, and grace? Who that believes in him, that belongs unto him, can fear to commit his departing spirit unto his love, power, and care? Even we also shall hereby in our dying moments see, by faith, heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ready to receive us. This added unto the love which all believers have unto the Lord Jesus, which is enflamed by contemplation of his glory, and their desires to be with him where he is, it will strengthen and confirm our minds in the resignation of our departing souls into his hand.

Secondly, It is required in us unto the same end, that we be ready and willing to part with the flesh, wherewith we are clothed, with all things that are useful and desirable thereunto. The alliance, the relation, the friendship, the union, that are between the soul and the body, are the greatest, the nearest, the firmest, that are or can be among mere created beings. There is nothing like it, nothing equal unto it. The union of three persons in the one single divine nature, and the union of two natures in one person of Christ, are infinite, ineffable, and exempted from all comparison. But among created beings, the union of these two essential parts of the same nature in one person, is most excellent. Nor is any thing equal to it, or like it, found in

any other creatures. Those who among them have most of life, have either no bodies, as angels; or no souls, but what perish with them, as all brute creatures below.

Angels being pure immaterial spirits, have nothing in them, nothing belonging unto their essence, that can die. Beasts have nothing in them that can live when their bodies die. The soul of a beast cannot be preserved in a separate condition, no not by an act of Almighty power; for it is not; and that which is not, cannot live. It is nothing but the body itself in an act of its material powers.

Only the nature of man in all the works of God is capable of this convulsion. The essential parts of it are separable by death, the one continuing to exist and act its especial powers in a separate state or condition. The powers of the whole entire nature acting in soul and body in conjunction, are all scattered and lost by death. But the powers of one essential part of the same nature, that is of the soul, are preserved after death in a more perfect acting and exercise than before. This is peculiar unto human nature, as a mean partaking of heaven and earth, of the perfection of angels above, and of the imperfection of the beasts below. Only there is this difference in these things: our participation of the heavenly spiritual perfections of the angelical nature, is for eternity; our participation of the imperfections of the animate creatures here below, is but for a season. For God hath designed our bodies unto such a glorious refinement at the resurrection, as that they shall have no more alliance unto that brutish nature, which perisheth for ever. For we shall be ἰσάγγελοι, like unto angels, or equal to them. Our bodies shall no more be capable of those acts and operations which are now common to us with other living creatures here below.

This is the pre-eminence of the nature of man, as the wise man declares. For unto that objection of atheistical epicureans, 'As the one dieth, so dieth the other; they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, and all go into one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to the dust again:' he granteth, that as unto their bodies it is for a season, in them we have a present participation of their nature; but, saith he, here lieth the difference, 'Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward unto the earth?' Unless we know this, unless we consider the different state of the spirit of men and beasts, we cannot be delivered from this atheism; but the thoughts hereof will set us at liberty from it. They die in like manner, and their bodies go equally to the dust for a season; but the beast hath no spirit, no soul, but what dies with the body and goes to the dust. If they had, their bodies also must be raised again unto a conjunction with them; otherwise, death would produce a new race of creatures unto eternity. But man hath an immortal soul, saith he, a heavenly spirit, which when the body goes into the dust for a season, ascends to heaven (where the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law, interpose not), from whence it is there to exist and to act all its native powers in a state of blessedness.

But as I said, by reason of this peculiar intimate union and relation between the soul and body, there is in the whole nature a fixed aversation from a dissolution. The soul and body are naturally and necessarily unwilling to fall into a state of separation, wherein the one shall cease to be what it was, and the other knows not clearly how it shall subsist. The body claspeth about the soul, and the soul receiveth strange impressions from its embraces; the entire

nature existing in the union of them both, being unalterably averse unto a dissolution.

Wherefore, unless we can overcome this inclination, we can never die comfortably or cheerfully. We would indeed rather choose to be 'clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life,' that the clothing of glory might come on our whole nature, soul and body, without dissolution. But if this may not be, yet then do believers so conquer this inclination by faith and views of the glory of Christ, as to attain a desire of this dissolution. So the apostle testifies of himself, 'I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better' than to abide here; Phil. i. 23. saith he, ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχω. Not an ordinary desire, not that which worketh in me now and then; but a constant, habitual inclination working in vehement acts and desires. And what doth he so desire? It is ἀναλῦσαι, 'to depart,' say we, out of this body, from this tabernacle, to leave it for a season. But it is such a departure as consists in the dissolution of the present state of his being, that it should not be what it is. But how is it possible that a man should attain such an inclination unto, such a readiness for, such a vehement desire of, a dissolution? It is from a view by faith of Christ and his glory, whence the soul is satisfied, that to be with him is incomparably better than in its present state and condition.

He therefore that would die comfortably, must be able to say within himself and to himself; Die, then, thou frail and sinful flesh; 'dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.' I yield thee up unto the righteous doom of the Holy One. Yet therein also I give thee into the hand of the great refiner, who will hide thee in thy grave, and by thy consump-

tion purify thee from all thy corruption and disposition to evil. And otherwise this will not be. After a long sincere endeavour for the mortification of all sin, I find it will never be absolutely perfect, but by this reduction into the dust. Thou shalt no more be a residence for the least remainder of sin unto eternity, nor any clog unto my soul in its actings on God. Rest therefore in hope; for God, in his appointed season, when he shall have a desire unto the work of his hands, will call unto thee, and thou shalt answer him out of the dust. Then shall he by an act of his Almighty power, not only restore thee unto thy pristine glory, as at the first creation, when thou wast the pure workmanship of his hands; but enrich and adorn thee with inconceivable privileges and advantages. Be not then afraid; away with all reluctancy, go into the dust, rest in hope, for thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

That which will enable us hereunto, in an eminent manner, is that view and consideration of the glory of Christ, which is the subject of the ensuing meditations. For he who is now possessed of all that glory, underwent this dissolution of nature as truly and really as ever we shall do.

Thirdly, There is required hereunto, a readiness to comply with the times and seasons wherein God would have us depart and leave this world. Many think they shall be willing to die when their time is come; but they have many reasons, as they suppose, to desire that it may not yet be, which for the most part arise merely from fear, and aversation of death. Some desire to live that they may see more of that glorious work of God for his church, which they believe he will accomplish. So Moses prayed that he might not die in the wilderness, but go over Jordan and see the good land, and that goodly mountain,

and Lebanon, the seat of the church, and of the worship of God; which yet God thought meet to deny unto him. And this denial of the request of Moses, made on the highest consideration possible, is instructive unto all in the like case. Others may judge themselves to have some work to do in the world, wherein they suppose that the glory of God, and good of the church is concerned, and therefore would be spared for a season. Paul knew not clearly whether it were not best for him to abide awhile longer in the flesh on this account. And David often deprecates the present season of death, because of the work which he had to do for God in the world. Others rise no higher than their own private interests or concerns with respect unto their persons, their families, their relations, and goods in this world. They would see these things in a better or more settled condition, before they die, and then they shall be most willing so to do. But it is the love of life that lies at the bottom of all these desires in men, which of itself will never forsake them. But no man can die cheerfully or comfortably, who lives not in a constant resignation of the time and season of his death unto the will of God, as well as himself with respect unto death itself. Our times are in his hand, at his sovereign disposal, and his will in all things must be complied withal. Without this resolution, without this resignation, no man can enjoy the least solid peace in this world.

Fourthly, As the times and seasons, so the ways and means of the approaches of death have especial trials, which unless we are prepared for them, will keep us under bondage with the fear of death itself. Long wasting wearing consumptions, burning fevers, strong pains of the stone, or the like from within, or sword, fire, tortures, with shame and reproach

from without, may be in the way of the access of death unto us. Some who have been wholly freed from all fears of death, as a dissolution of nature, who have looked on it as amiable, and desirable in itself, have yet had great exercise in their minds about these ways of its approach. They have earnestly desired, that this peculiar bitterness of the cup might be taken away; to get above all perplexities on the account of these things, is part of our wisdom in dying daily. And we are to have always in a readiness, those graces and duties which are necessary thereunto. Such are a constant resignation of ourselves, in all events, unto the sovereign will, pleasure, and disposal of God. 'May he not do what he will with his own?' Is it not right and meet it should be so? Is not his will in all things infinitely holy, wise, just, and good? Doth he not know what is best for us, and what conduceth most unto his own glory? Doth not he alone do so? So is it to live in the exercise of faith, that if God calls us unto any of those things, which are peculiarly dreadful unto our natures, he will give us such supplies of spiritual strength and patience, as shall enable us to undergo them; if not with ease and joy, yet with peace and quietness beyond our expectation. Multitudes have had experience that those things which at a distance have had an aspect of overwhelming dread, have been far from unsupportable in their approach, when strength hath been received from above to encounter with them. And moreover it is in this case required, that we be frequent and steady in comparing these things with those which are eternal, both as unto the misery, which we are freed from, and that blessedness which is prepared for us. But I shall proceed no farther with these particulars.

There is none of all the things we have insisted

on, neither the resignation of a departing soul into the hand of God, nor a willingness to lay down this flesh in the dust, nor a readiness to comply with the will of God, as to the times and seasons, or the way and manner of the approach of death, that can be attained unto, without a prospect of that glory that shall give us a new state far more excellent than what we here leave or depart from. This we cannot have, whatever we pretend, unless we have some present views of the glory of Christ. An apprehension of the future manifestation of it in heaven, will not relieve us, if here we know not what it is, and wherein it doth consist; if we have not some previous discovery of it in this life. This is that which will make all things easy and pleasant unto us, even death itself, as it is a means to bring us unto its full enjoyment.

Other great and glorious advantages which may be obtained in the diligent discharge of the duty here proposed, might be insisted on; but that the things themselves discoursed of will evidently discover, and direct us unto the spring and reasons of them: besides, weakness, weariness, and the near approaches of death do call me off from any farther labour in this kind.

MEDITATIONS AND DISCOURSES

ON THE

GLORY OF CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.— John xvii. 24.

THE high-priest under the law, when he was to enter into the holy place on the solemn day of atonement, was to take both his hands full of sweet incense from the golden table of incense, to carry along with him in his entrance. He had also a censer filled with fire, that was taken from the altar of burnt-offerings, where atonement was made for sin with blood. Upon his actual entrance through the veil, he put the incense on the fire in the censer, until the cloud of its smoke covered the ark, and the mercy-seat. See Lev. xvi. 12, 13. And the end hereof was to present unto God, in the behalf of the people, a sweet smelling savour from the sacrifice of propitiation. See the declaration of these things in our exposition of Heb. ix.

In answer unto this mystical type, the great High Priest of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ, being to enter into the 'holy place not made with hands,' did by the glorious prayer recorded in this chapter, influenced from the blood of his sacrifice, fill the heavens above, the glorious place of God's residence, with a cloud of incense, or the sweet perfume of his blessed intercession, typed by the incense offered by the high-priest of old. By the same eternal fire wherewith he offered himself a bloody sacrifice to make atonement for sin, he kindled in his most holy soul those desires for the application of all its benefits unto his church, which are here expressed, and wherein his intercession doth consist.

It is only one passage in the verse above named, that at present I design an inquiry into. And this is the subject

matter of what the Lord Christ here desires in the behalf of those given him by the Father; namely, that they may behold his glory.

It is evident, that in this prayer the Lord Christ hath respect unto his own glory, and the manifestation of it, which he had in the entrance asked of the Father, ver. 4, 5. But in this place he hath not so much respect unto it as his own, as unto the advantage, benefit, satisfaction, and blessedness of his disciples, in the beholding of it. For these things were the end of all that mediatory glory which was given unto him. So Joseph charged his brethren, when he had revealed himself unto them, that they should 'tell his father of all his glory in Egypt;' Gen. xlv. 13. This he did, not for an ostentation of his own glory, but for the satisfaction which he knew his father would take in the knowledge of it. And such a manifestation of his glory unto his disciples doth the Lord Christ here desire, as might fill them with blessed satisfaction for evermore.

This alone which is here prayed for, will give them such satisfaction, and nothing else. The hearts of believers are like the needle touched by the loadstone, which cannot rest until it comes to the point whereunto by the secret virtue of it, it is directed. For being once touched by the love of Christ, receiving therein an impression of secret ineffable virtue, they will ever be in motion, and restless, until they come unto him, and behold his glory. That soul which can be satisfied without it, that cannot be eternally satisfied with it, is not partaker of the efficacy of his intercession.

I shall lay the foundation of the ensuing meditations in this one assertion, namely, that one of the greatest privileges and advancements of believers, both in this world, and unto eternity, consists in their beholding the glory of Christ. This therefore he desires for them in this solemn intercession, as the complement of all his other requests in their behalf; 'that they may behold my glory.' Ἵνα θεωρῶσι, that they may see, view, behold, or contemplate on my glory. The reasons why I assign not this glorious privilege only unto the heavenly state, which is principally respected in this place, but apply it unto the state of believers in this world also, with their duties and privileges therein, shall be immediately declared.

All unbelievers do in their heart call Christ 'Ichabod;'

'Where is the glory?' They see neither 'form nor comeliness in him,' that he should be desired. They look on him as Michal, Saul's daughter, did on David 'dancing before the ark,' when she despised him in her heart. They do not indeed (many of them) 'call Jesus anathema,' but cry, 'Hail, Master,' and then crucify him.

Hence have we so many cursed opinions advanced in derogation unto his glory, some of them really destructive of all that is truly so; yea, denying the 'only Lord that bought us,' and substituting a false Christ in his room. And others there are who express their slight thoughts of him and his glory, by bold irreverent inquiries, of what use his person is in our religion; as though there were any thing in our religion, that hath either reality, substance, or truth, but by virtue of its relation thereunto. And by their answers, they bring their own inquiries yet nearer unto the borders of blasphemy.

Never was there an age since the name of Christians was known upon the earth, wherein there was such a direct opposition made unto the person and glory of Christ, as there is in that wherein we live. There were indeed in the first times of the church, swarms of proud, doting, brainsick persons, who vented many foolish imaginations about him, which issued at length in Arianism, in whose ruins they were buried. The gates of hell in them, prevailed not against the rock on which the church is built. But as it was said of Cæsar, 'Solus accessit sobrius, ad perdendam rempublicam;' 'He alone went soberly about the destruction of the commonwealth;' so we now have great numbers who oppose the person and glory of Christ, under a pretence of sobriety of reason, as they vainly plead. Yea, the disbelief of the mysteries of the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Son of God, the sole foundation of Christian religion, is so diffused in the world, as that it hath almost devoured the power and vitals of it. And not a few, who dare not yet express their minds, do give broad intimations of their intentions and good will towards him, in making them the object of their scorn and reproach, who desire to know nothing but him, and him crucified.

God in his appointed time will effectually vindicate his honour and glory, from the vain attempts of men of corrupt minds against them.

In the mean time, it is the duty of all those who 'love

the Lord Jesus in sincerity,' to give testimony in a peculiar manner unto his divine person and glory, according unto their several capacities, because of the opposition that is made against them.

I have thought myself on many accounts obliged to cast my mite into this treasury. And I have chosen so to do, not in a way of controversy (which formerly I have engaged in), but so, as together with the vindication of the truth, to promote the strengthening of the faith of true believers, their edification in the knowledge of it; and to express the experience which they have, or may have, of the power and reality of these things.

That which at present I design to demonstrate is, that the beholding of the glory of Christ, is one of the greatest privileges and advancements that believers are capable of in this world, or that which is to come. It is that whereby they are first gradually conformed unto it, and then fixed in the eternal enjoyment of it. For here in this life, 'beholding his glory, they are changed or transformed into the likeness of it,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. and hereafter, they shall be 'for ever like unto him,' because they 'shall see him as he is;' 1 John iii. 1, 2. Hereon do our present comforts, and future blessedness depend. This is the life and reward of our souls. 'He that hath seen him, hath seen the Father also;' John xiv. 9. For we discern the 'light of the knowledge of God, only in the face of Jesus Christ;' 2 Cor iv. 6.

There are, therefore, two ways or degrees of beholding the glory of Christ, which are constantly distinguished in the Scripture. The one is by faith in this world, which is the evidence of things not seen; the other is by sight, or immediate vision in eternity. 2 Cor. v. 7. 'We walk by faith and not by sight.' We do so whilst we are in this world, 'whilst we are present in the body, and absent from the Lord;' ver. 8. But we shall live and walk by sight hereafter. And it is the Lord Christ and his glory, which are the immediate object both of this faith and sight. For we here 'behold him darkly in a glass' (that is, by faith), 'but we shall see him face to face' (by immediate vision). 'Now we know him in part: but then we shall know him as we are known;' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. What is the difference between these two ways of beholding the glory of Christ, shall be afterward declared.

It is the first way, namely, by vision in the light of glory that is principally included in that prayer of our blessed Saviour, that his disciples may be 'where he is, to behold his glory.' But, I shall not confine my inquiry thereunto; nor doth our Lord Jesus exclude from his desire, that sight of his glory which we have by faith in this world; but prays for the perfection of it in heaven. It is therefore the first way, that in the first place I shall insist upon, and that for the reasons ensuing.

1. No man shall ever behold the glory of Christ by sight hereafter, who doth not in some measure behold it by faith here in this world; grace is a necessary preparation for glory, and faith for sight. Where the subject, the soul, is not previously seasoned with grace and faith, it is not capable of glory, or vision. Nay, persons not disposed hereby unto it, cannot desire it, whatever they pretend; they only deceive their own souls, in supposing that so they do. Most men will say with confidence, living and dying, 'that they desire to be with Christ, and to behold his glory;' but they can give no reason, why they should desire any such thing; only they think it somewhat that is better than to be in that evil condition which otherwise they must be cast into for ever, when they can be here no more. If a man pretend himself to be enamoured on, or greatly to desire, what he never saw, nor was ever represented unto him, he doth but dote on his own imaginations. And the pretended desires of many, to behold the glory of Christ in heaven, who have no view of it by faith whilst they are here in this world, are nothing but self-deceiving imaginations.

So do the Papists delude themselves. Their carnal affections are excited by their outward senses, to delight in images of Christ, in his sufferings, his resurrection, and glory above. Hereon they satisfy themselves, that they behold the glory of Christ himself, and that with love and great delight. But whereas there is not the least true representation made of the Lord Christ, or his glory, in these things, that being confined absolutely unto the gospel alone, and this way of attempting it being laid under a severe interdict, they do but sport themselves with their own deceivings.

The apostle tells us concerning himself, and other believers, when the Lord Christ was present, and conversed

with them in the days of his flesh, that they 'saw his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;' John i. 14. And we may inquire, what was this glory of Christ, which they so saw, and by what means they obtained a prospect of it? For 1. It was not the glory of his outward condition, as we behold the glory and grandeur of the kings and potentates of the earth; for he made himself of no reputation, but being in the form of a servant, he walked in the condition of a man of low degree. The secular grandeur of his pretended vicar, makes no representation of that glory of his, which his disciples saw. He kept no court, nor house of entertainment, nor (though he made all things) had of his own where to lay his head. Nor 2. Was it with respect to the outward form of the flesh which he was made, wherein he took our nature on him, as we see the glory of a comely or beautiful person; for he had therein neither form nor comeliness, that he should be desired, 'his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men;' Isa. lii. 14. liii. 2, 3. All things appeared in him as became 'a man of sorrows.' Nor 3. Was it absolutely the eternal essential glory of his divine nature, that is intended. For this no man can see in this world. What we shall attain in a view thereof hereafter, we know not. But 4. It was his glory, as he was 'full of grace and truth.' They saw the glory of his person and his office in the administration of grace and truth. And how, or by what means, did they see this glory of Christ? It was by faith, and no otherwise. For this privilege was granted unto them only who 'received him, and believed on his name;' ver. 12. This was that glory which the Baptist saw, when upon his coming unto him he said unto all that were present, 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;' John i. 29—33.

Wherefore, let no man deceive himself: he that hath no sight of the glory of Christ here, shall never have any of it hereafter unto his advantage. It is not therefore unto edification, to discourse of beholding the glory of Christ in heaven by vision, until we go through a trial, whether we see any thing of it in this world by faith or no.

2. The beholding of Christ in glory, is that which in itself is too high, illustrious, and marvellous for us in our

present condition. It hath a splendour and glory too great for our present spiritual visive facluty; as the direct, immediate sight of the sun darkens our sight, and doth not relieve or strengthen it at all. Wherefore, we have no way to take into our minds any true spiritual apprehensions of the nature of immediate vision, or what it is to see the glory of Christ in heaven, but by that view which we have by faith in this life of the same glory. Whatever otherwise falls into our minds, is but conjecture and imagination; such as are the contemplations of most about heavenly things.

I have seen and read somewhat of the writings of learned men, concerning the state of future glory; some of them are filled with excellent notions of truth, and elegancy of speech, whereby they cannot but much affect the minds of them who duly consider what they say. But I know not well whence it comes to pass, many complain, that in reading of such discourses they are like a man who 'behold his natural face in a glass, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was;' as one of old complained to the same purpose upon his perusal of Plato's contemplations about the immortality of the soul. The things spoken do not abide nor incorporate with our minds. They please and refresh for a little while, like a shower of rain in a dry season, that soaketh not unto the roots of things; the power of them doth not enter into us. Is it not all from hence, that their notions of future things are not educed out of the experience which we have of the beginnings of them in this world; without which, they can make no permanent abode in our minds, nor continue any influence upon our affections? Yea, the soul is disturbed, not edified, in all contemplations of future glory, when things are proposed unto it, whereof in this life it hath neither foretaste, sense, experience, nor evidence. No man ought to look for any thing in heaven, but what one way or other he hath some experience of in this life. If men were fully persuaded hereof, they would be, it may be, more in the exercise of faith and love about heavenly things, than for the most part they are. At present they know not what they enjoy, and they look for they know not what.

Hence is it, that men utterly strangers unto all experience of the beginning of glory in themselves as an effect of

with them in the days of his flesh, that they 'sa[illegible] ctures, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Fathe[illegible] t of that and truth;' John i. 14. And we may inqui[illegible] that which glory of Christ, which they so saw, and [illegible] ave; because obtained a prospect of it? For 1. It [illegible] nselves; nor do his outward condition, as we behold [illegible] rst-fruits in their of the kings and potentates of th[illegible] one, and not other-self of no reputation, but bein[illegible] hrist by faith here in walked in the condition of [illegible] sed conceptions of our cular grandeur of his pret[illegible] nmediate vision, as shall tion of that glory of his [illegible] admiration of it, and desires no court, nor house [illegible] all things) had of [illegible] Was it with res[illegible] then our present edification is principally con-he was made, [illegible] For in this present beholding of the glory of the glory of [illegible] the life and power of faith are most eminently acted. neither [illegible] And from this exercise of faith, doth love unto Christ prin-'his v[illegible] ally, if not solely, arise and spring. If therefore we de-mor[illegible] are to have faith in its vigour, or love in its power, giving ap[illegible] rest, complacency, and satisfaction, unto our own souls, we are to seek for them in the diligent discharge of this duty; elsewhere they will not be found. Herein would I live; herein would I die; hereon would I dwell in my thoughts and affections, to the withering and consumption of all the painted beauties of this world, unto the crucifying all things here below, until they become unto me a dead and deformed thing, no way meet for affectionate embraces.

For these, and the like reasons, I shall first inquire into our beholding of the glory of Christ in this world by faith; and therein endeavour to lead the souls of them that believe, into the more retired walks of faith, love, and holy meditation, 'whereby the king is held in his galleries;' Cant. vii. 5.

But because there is no benefit in, nor advantage by, the contemplation of this sacred truth, but what consists in an improvement of the practice of the duty declared in it, namely, the constant beholding of the glory of Christ by faith; I shall, for the promotion of it, premise some few advantages which we may have thereby.

1. We shall hereby be made fit and meet for heaven. Every man is not so, who desires it, and hopes for it. For some are not only unworthy of it, and excluded from it, by

reason of sin; but they are unmeet for it, and incapable of any advantage by it. All men indeed think themselves fit enough for glory (what should hinder them?) if they could attain it; but it is because they know not what it is. Men shall not be clothed with glory, as it were, whether they will or no. It is to be received in that exercise of the faculties of their souls which such persons have no ability for. Music hath no pleasure in it, unto them that cannot hear; nor the most beautiful colours unto them that cannot see. It would be no benefit unto a fish to take him from the bottom of the ocean, filled with cold and darkness, and to place him under the beams of the sun. For he is no way meet to receive any refreshment thereby. Heaven itself would not be more advantageous unto persons not renewed by the Spirit of grace in this life.

Hence the apostle gives 'thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;' Col. i. 12. Indeed, the beginning here, and the fulness of glory hereafter, are communicated unto believers by an almighty act of the will and grace of God. But yet he hath ordained ways and means whereby they may be made meet receptive subjects of the glory so to be communicated unto them. That this way and means is by the beholding of the glory of Christ by faith, shall be fully declared in our progress. This therefore should excite us unto this duty; for all our present glory consists in our preparation for future glory.

2. No man can by faith take a real view of this glory, but virtue will proceed from it in a transforming power, to 'change him into the same image;' 2 Cor. iii. 18. How this is done, and how we become like unto Christ, by beholding his glory, shall be fully declared in our progress.

3. The constant contemplation of the glory of Christ, will give rest, satisfaction, and complacency unto the souls of them who are exercised therein. Our minds are apt to be filled with a multitude of perplexed thoughts; fears, cares, dangers, distresses, passions, and lusts, do make various impressions on the minds of men, filling them with disorder, darkness, and confusion. But where the soul is fixed in its thoughts and contemplations on this glorious object, it will be brought into, and kept in, a holy, serene, spiritual frame. For 'to be spiritually minded is life and

peace. And this it doth, by taking off our hearts, from all undue regard unto all things below, in comparison of the great worth, beauty, and glory, of what we are conversant withal. See Phil. iii. 7—11. A defect herein makes many of us strangers unto a heavenly life; and to live beneath the spiritual refreshments and satisfactions that the gospel doth tender unto us.

4. The sight of the glory of Christ, is the spring and cause of our everlasting blessedness. 'We shall be ever with the Lord;' 1 Thess. iv. 17. Or, 'be with Christ, which is best of all;' Phil. i. 23. For there shall we 'behold his glory;' John xvii. 24. and by 'seeing him as he is, we shall be made like him;' 1 John iii. 2. which is our everlasting blessedness.

The enjoyment of God by sight, is commonly called, the beatifical vision; and it is the sole fountain of all the actings of our souls in the state of blessedness, which the old philosophers knew nothing of; neither do we know distinctly what they are, or what is this sight of God. Howbeit, this we know, that God in his immense essence is invisible unto our corporeal eyes, and will be so to eternity; as also incomprehensible unto our minds. For nothing can perfectly comprehend that which is infinite, but what is itself infinite. Wherefore, the blessed and blessing sight which we shall have of God, will be always 'in the face of Jesus Christ.' Therein will that manifestation of the glory of God in his infinite perfections, and all their blessed operations, so shine into our souls, as shall immediately fill us with peace, rest, and glory.

These things we here admire, but cannot comprehend. We know not well what we say, when we speak of them: yet is there in true believers a foresight, and foretaste of this glorious condition. There enters sometimes, by the word and Spirit into their hearts, such a sense of the uncreated glory of God, shining forth in Christ, as affects and satiates their souls with ineffable joy. Hence ariseth that 'peace of God, which is above all understanding, keeping our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ;' Phil. iv. 7. 'Christ,' in believers, 'the hope of glory,' gives them to taste of the first-fruits of it; yea, sometimes to bathe their souls in the fountain of life, and to drink of the rivers of pleasure that are at his right hand. Where any are utterly unacquainted

with these things, they are carnal, yea blind, and see nothing afar off. These enjoyments indeed are rare, and for the most part of short continuance. 'Rara hora, brevis mora.' But it is from our own sloth and darkness that we do not enjoy more visits of this grace; and that the dawnings of glory do not more shine on our souls. Such things as these may excite us to diligence in the duty proposed unto us.

And I shall inquire, 1. What is that glory of Christ, which we do, or may behold by faith? 2. How we do behold it. 3. Wherein our doing so differs from immediate vision in heaven. And in the whole we shall endeavour an answer unto the inquiry made unto the spouse, by the daughters of Jerusalem. Cant. v. 9. 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved, thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?'

CHAP. II.

The glory of the person of Christ, as the only representative of God unto the Church.

THE glory of Christ, is the glory of the person of Christ. So he calls it τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἐμὴν, John xvii. 24. That glory which is mine, which belongeth to me, unto my person.

The person of Christ may be considered two ways: 1. Absolutely in itself. 2. In the susception and discharge of his office, with what ensued thereon. His glory on these distinct accounts, is distinct and different; but all equally his own. How in both respects we may behold it by faith is that which we inquire into.

The first thing wherein we may behold the glory of the person of Christ, God and man, which was given him of his Father, consists in the representation of the nature of God, and of the divine person of the Father, unto the church in him; 'For we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;' 2 Cor. iv. 6. Otherwise we know it not, we see it not, we see nothing of it; that is, in the way of seeing and knowing God, declared in the Scripture, as our duty and

blessedness. The glory of God comprehends both the holy properties of his nature, and the counsels of his will; and the light of the knowledge of these things, we have only in the face or person of Jesus Christ. Whatever obscure imperfect notions we may have of them other ways, we cannot have φοτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'the light of the' illuminating, irradiating 'knowledge of the glory of God,' which may enlighten our minds, and sanctify our hearts, but only ἐν προσώπῳ 'in the face or person of Jesus Christ;' for 'he is the image of God;' 2 Cor. iv. 4. 'The brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;' Heb. i. 2. The 'image of the invisible God;' Col. i. 16. I do here only mention these things, because I have handled them at large in my discourse of the mystery of godliness, or the person of Christ; whereunto I refer the readers for their full declaration and vindication. Herein is he glorious, in that he is the great representative of the nature of God, and his will unto us, which without him would have been eternally hid from us, or been invisible unto us; we should never have seen God at any time, here nor hereafter; John i. 18.

In his divine person absolutely considered, he is the essential image of God, even the Father. He is in the Father, and the Father in him, in the unity of the same divine essence; John xiv. 10. Now he is with the Father; John i. 1.' In the distinction of his person, so is he his essential image; Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 2. In his incarnation he becomes the representative image of God unto the church, 2 Cor. iv. 6. without whom our understandings can make no such approach unto the divine excellencies, but that God continues to be unto us, what he is in himself, the 'invisible God.' In the face of Jesus Christ, we see his glory.

This is the original glory of Christ given him by his Father, and which by faith we may behold. He, and he alone, declares, represents, and makes known, unto angels and men, the essential glory of the invisible God, his attributes, and his will, without which, a perpetual comparative darkness would have been on the whole creation, especially that part of it here below.

This is the foundation of our religion, the rock whereon the church is built, the ground of all our hopes of salvation,

of life and immortality: all is resolved into this; namely, the representation that is made of the nature and will of God, in the person and office of Christ. If this fail us, we are lost for ever; if this rock stand firm, the church is safe here, and shall be triumphant hereafter.

Herein then is the Lord Christ exceedingly glorious. Those who cannot behold this glory of his by faith, namely, as he is the great divine ordinance to represent God unto us, they know him not. In their worship of him, they worship but an image of their own devising.

Yea, in the ignorance and neglect hereof, consists the formal nature of unbelief, even that which is inevitably ruinous unto the souls of men. He that discerns not the representation of the glory of God in the person of Christ unto the souls of men, is an unbeliever. Such was the state of the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles of old; they did not, they would not, they could not, behold the glory of God in him, nor how he did represent him. That this was both the cause, and the formal nature of their unbelief, the apostle declares at large, 1 Cor. i. 21—25. Not to see the wisdom of God, and the power of God, and consequently all the other holy properties of his nature in Christ, is to be an unbeliever.

The essence of faith consists in a due ascription of glory to God; Rom. iv. 20. This we cannot attain unto without the manifestation of those divine excellencies unto us, wherein he is glorious. This is done in Christ alone, so as that we may glorify God in a saving and acceptable manner. He who discerns not the glory of divine wisdom, power, goodness, love, and grace, in the person and office of Christ, with the way of the salvation of sinners by him, is an unbeliever.

Hence the great design of the devil, in the beginning of the preaching of the gospel, was to blind the eyes of men, and fill their minds with prejudices, that they might not behold this glory of his; so the apostle gives an account of his success in this design, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' By various

ways and methods of deceit, to secure the reputation he had got, of being 'God of this world,' by pretences and appearances of supernatural power and wisdom, he laboured to blind the eyes of men with prejudices against that glorious light of the gospel, which proposed the Lord Christ as the only image of God. This blindness, this darkness is cured in them that believe, by the mighty power of God; for 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath irradiated our hearts with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' ver. 6. wherein true saving faith doth consist. Under this darkness perished the unbelieving world of Jews and Gentiles; and such is the present condition of all by whom the divine person of Christ is denied; for no mere creature can ever make a perfect representation of God unto us. But we must a little farther inquire into this mystery.

1. Since men fell from God by sin, it is no small part of their misery and punishment, that they are covered with thick darkness and ignorance of the nature of God. They know him not, they have not seen him at any time. Hence is that promise to the church in Christ, Isa. lx. 1, 2. 'For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.'

The ancient philosophers made great inquiries into, and obtained many notions of, the Divine Being, its existence and excellencies. And these notions they adorned with great elegancy of speech, to allure others unto the admiration of them. Hereon they boasted themselves to be the only wise men in the world; Rom. i. 22. φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ, 'they boasted that they were the wise:' but we must abide in the judgment of the apostle, concerning them in their inquiries; he assures us, that the world in its wisdom, that is, these wise men in it by their wisdom knew not God; 1 Cor. i. 21. And he calls the authors of their best notions, Atheists, or men 'without God in the world;' Eph. ii. 12. For,

1. They had no certain guide, rule, nor light, which being attended unto, might lead them infallibly into the knowledge of the divine nature: all they had of this kind was their own λογισμοὶ their reasonings or imaginations, whereby they commenced συζητητὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου 'the great disputers

of the world;' but in them they 'waxed vain, and their foolish heart was darkened;' Rom. i. 21. They did at best but endeavour ψηλαφᾶν 'to feel after God,' as men do in the dark, after what they cannot clearly discern; Acts xvii. 27. Among others, Cicero's book, de Natura Deorum, gives us an exact account of the intention of the apostle in that expression. And it is at this day not want of wit, but hatred of the mysteries of our religion, which makes so many prone to forego all supernatural revelation, and to betake themselves unto a religion declared, as they suppose, by reason, and the light of nature; like bats and owls, who being not able to bear the light of the sun, betake themselves unto the twilight, to the dawnings of light and darkness.

2. Whatever they did attain, as unto rational notions about things invisible and incomprehensible, yet could they never deliver themselves from such principles and practices in idolatry and all manner of flagitious sins, as that they could be of any benefit unto them. This is so effectually demonstrated by the apostle in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, as that we need not to insist upon it.

Men may talk what they please of a light within them, or of the power of reason, to conduct them unto that knowledge of God, whereby they may live unto him: but if they had nothing else, if they did not boast themselves of that light, which hath its foundation and original in divine revelation alone, they would not excel them, who in the best management of their own reasonings, 'knew not God,' but waxed vain in their imaginations.

With respect unto this universal darkness, that is, ignorance of God, with horrid confusion accompanying it in the minds of men, Christ is called, and is, the 'light of men,' the 'light of the world,' because in and by him alone this darkness is dispelled, as he is the Sun of Righteousness.'

2. This darkness in the minds of men, this ignorance of God, his nature, and his will, was the original of all evil unto the world, and yet continues so to be. For,

1. Hereon did Satan erect his kingdom and throne, obtaining in his design until he bare himself as 'the God of this world,' and was so esteemed by the most. He exalted himself by virtue of this darkness (as he is the 'prince of darkness'), into the place and room of God, as the object of

the religious worship of men. For the things which the 'Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed unto devils, and not to God;' 1 Cor. x. 21. Levit. xvii. 7. xxxii. 17. Psal. cviii. 27. Gal. iii. 8. This is the territory of Satan; yea, the power and sceptre of his kingdom in the minds of the 'children of disobedience.' Hereby he maintains his dominion unto this day in many and great nations, and with individual persons innumerable.

2. This is the spring of all wickedness and confusion among men themselves. Hence arose that flood of abominations in the old world, which God took away with a flood of desolation: hence were the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, which he revenged with 'fire from heaven.' In brief; all the rage, blood, confusion, desolations, cruelties, oppressions, villanies, which the world hath been, and is filled withal, whereby the souls of men have been, and are flooded into eternal destruction, have all arisen from this corrupt fountain of the ignorance of God.

3. Of such as those described, we are the posterity and offspring. Our forefathers in this nation, were given up unto as brutish a service of the devil, as any nation under the sun. It is therefore an effect of infinite mercy, that the day hath dawned on us, poor Gentiles, and that the 'day-spring from on high hath visited us.' See the glory of this grace expressed, Eph. iii. 5—10. God might have left us to perish in the blindness and ignorance of our forefathers; but of his own accord, and by his own powerful grace alone, he hath 'translated us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' But alas! the horrible ingratitude of men, for the glorious light of the gospel, and the abuse of it, will issue in a sore revenge.

God was known under the Old Testament, by the revelation of his word, and the institution of his worship. This was the glory and privilege of Israel, as the psalmist declares, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation.' The church then knew him; yet so as that they had an apprehension that he dwelt in 'thick darkness,' where they could not have any clear views of him; Exod. xx. 21. Deut. v. 22. 1 Kings viii. 12. 2 Chron. vi. 1. And the reason why God so represented him-

self in darkness unto them, was to instruct them in their imperfect state, wherein they could not comprehend that glory which should afterward be revealed. For as he is now made known in Christ, we see that 'he is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.'

4. Hitherto darkness in general covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, as unto the knowledge of God; only there was a twilight in the church. The day did not yet dawn, the 'shadows did not flee away,' nor the 'day-star shine' in the hearts of men. But when the 'Sun of Righteousness' did arise in his strength and beauty, when the Son of God 'appeared in the flesh,' and in the discharge of his office; God himself, as unto his being, and manner of existence in three distinct persons, with all the glorious properties of the divine nature, were illustriously manifested unto them that did believe, and the light of the knowledge of them dispelled all the shadows that were in the church, and shone into the darkness which was in the world, so as that none continued ignorant of God, but those who would not see. See John i. 5. 14. 17, 18. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Herein is the Lord Christ glorious. And this is that which I shall now speak unto; namely, how we may behold the glory of Christ in the representation and revelation that is made of God and his glory, in his person and office, unto all that do believe. For it is not so much the declaration of the nature of the things themselves, wherein the glory of Christ doth consist, as our way and duty, in the beholding of them, which at present is designed.

He calls unto us, saying, 'Behold me, look unto me, and be saved;' Isa. xlv. 2. What is it that we see in Christ? What do we behold in him? He asketh that question concerning his church, 'What will ye see in the Shulamite?' Whereto he answers, 'As it were the company of two armies;' Cant vi. 13. or the two churches of the Old and New Testament, in order and beauty. We may inquire, What shall we, what do we see in him? Do we see him as the 'image of the invisible God,' representing him, his nature, properties, and will unto us? Do we see him as the 'character,' the 'express image of the person of the Father,' so that we have no need of Philip's request, 'Lord, shew us the Father?'

because having seen him, 'we have seen the Father also;' John xiv. 9.

This is our first saving view of Christ, the first instance of our beholding his glory by faith. So to see him, as to see God in him, is to behold his glory; for herein he is eternally glorious. And this is that glory whose view we ought to long for, and labour after. And if we see it not, we are yet in darkness; yea, though we say we see, we are blind like others. So David longed and prayed for it, when yet he could behold it only in types and shadows; Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen them in the sanctuary.' For there was in the sanctuary an obscure representation of the glory of God in Christ. How much more should we prize that view of it, which we may have with open face, though yet 'as in a glass?' 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Moses, when he had seen the works of God, which were great and marvellous, yet found not himself satisfied therewith; wherefore after all, he prays that God 'would shew him his glory;' Exod. xxxiii. 18. He knew that the ultimate rest, blessedness, and satisfaction of the soul, is not in seeing the works of God, but the glory of God himself. Therefore did he desire some immediate dawnings of it upon him in this world. 'I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.' And if we have right apprehensions of the future state of blessedness, we cannot but have the same desire of seeing more of his glory in this life. But the question is, how we may attain it? If we are left unto ourselves in this inquiry, if we have no other way for it, but the immediate fixing of our thoughts on the immensity of the divine nature, we must come every one to the conclusion that Agur makes on the like consideration; 'Surely I am more brutish than any man; and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fist? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?' Prov. xxx. 2—4.

It is in Christ alone, that we may have a clear distinct view of the glory of God and his excellencies.[a] For him, and him alone, hath he appointed the representative of himself unto us; and we shall take an account hereof in one or two especial instances.

1. Infinite wisdom is one of the most glorious properties of the divine nature: it is that which is directive of all the external works of God, wherein the glory of all the other excellencies of God is manifested; wherefore the manifestation of the whole glory of God proceeds originally from infinite wisdom. But as Job speaks, 'Where shall this wisdom be found, and what is the place of understanding? chap. xxviii. 12. 'Can we by searching, find out God? Can we find out the Almighty to perfection?' chap. xi. 7. As it is in itself an essential, eternal property of the divine nature, we can have no comprehension of it: we can but adore it in that infinite distance wherein we stand from God; but in its operations and effects it may be discerned; for they are designed of God for its manifestation. Among these the most excellent is the contrivance of the great work of the salvation of the church; so it is celebrated by the apostle, Eph. iii. 9—11. 'To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world, hath been in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.'

If we have any interest in God, if we have any hopes of blessedness in beholding of his glory unto eternity, we cannot but desire a view (such as is attainable) of this infinite manifold wisdom of God in this life. But it is in Christ alone that we can discern any thing of it; for him hath the Father chosen and sealed to represent it unto us. All the treasures of this wisdom are hid, laid up, and laid out in him: herein lies the essence and form of faith. Believers by it do see the wisdom of God in Christ, in his person and office: Christ the wisdom of God. Unbelievers see it not, as the apostle argues, 1 Cor. i. 22—24.

In beholding the glory of this infinite wisdom of God in Christ, we behold his own glory also; the glory given him

[a] See John. i. 18. xiv. 7—10. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Col. i. 16. Eph. iii. 4—10. Heb. i. 2.

of his Father; for this is his glory, that in and by him, and him alone, the wisdom of God is manifested and represented unto us. When God appointed him as the great and only means of this end, he gave him honour and glory above the whole creation; for it is but little of divine wisdom which the works of it declare, in comparison of what is manifested in Christ Jesus. We no way deny or extenuate the manifestation that is made of the wisdom of God in the works of creation and providence. It is sufficient to detect the folly of atheism and idolatry, and was designed of God unto that end. But its comparitive insufficiency, with respect unto the representation of it in Christ, as unto the ends of knowing God aright, and living unto him, the Scripture doth abundantly attest. And the abuse of it was catholic, as the apostle declares, Rom. i. 20, &c. To see this wisdom clearly, is our wisdom; and a due apprehension of it, fills the souls of believers 'with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.'

2. We may also instance in the love of God. The apostle tells us, that 'God is love;' 1 John iv. 8. Divine love is not to be considered only in its effects, but in its nature and essence; and so it is God himself; for 'God is love.' And a blessed revelation this is of the divine nature; it casts out envy, hatred, malice, revenge, with all their fruits, in rage, fierceness, implacability, persecution, murder, into the territories of Satan. They belong not unto God in his nature or actings; for 'God is love.' So the same apostle tells us, that he who 'slew his brother, was of the wicked one;' 1 John iii. 12. He was of the devil his father, and his works did he do.

But the inquiry is as before; how shall we have a view of this love, of God as love? By what way or means shall we behold the glory of it? It is hidden from all living, in God himself. The wise philosophers, who discoursed so much of the love of God, knew nothing of this, that 'God is love.' The most of the natural notions of men about it are corrupt, and the best of them weak and imperfect. Generally the thoughts of men about it, are, that he is of a facile and easy nature, one that they may make bold withal in all their occasions, as the psalmist declares, Psal. l. 21. And whereas it must be learned in its effects, operations,

and divine ways of its manifestation, those who know not Christ, know nothing of them; and many things in providence do interpose to hinder our views of this love; for although that indeed 'God is love,' yet 'his wrath is revealed from heaven against the ungodliness of men;' as all things at this day are filled with evidences of his anger and displeasure: how then shall we know, wherein shall we behold, the glory of God in this, that he is love? The apostle declares it in the next words, ver. 9. 'Herein was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.' This is the only evidence given us that 'God is love.' Hereby alone is the divine nature as such made known unto us; namely, in the mission, person, and office of the Son of God; without this all is in darkness as unto the true nature and supreme operation of this divine love.

Herein do we behold the glory of Christ himself, even in this life. This glory was given him of the Father; namely, that he now should declare and evidence that 'God is love;' and he did so, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. Herein we may see how excellent, how beautiful, how glorious, and desirable he is, seeing in him alone we have a due representation of God as he is love, which is the most joyful sight of God that any creature can obtain. He who beholds not the glory of Christ herein, is utterly ignorant of those heavenly mysteries; he knoweth neither God nor Christ; he hath neither the Father nor the Son. He knows not God, because he knows not the holy properties of his nature in the principal way designed by infinite wisdom for their manifestation; he knows not Christ, because he sees not the glory of God in him. Wherefore, whatever notions men may have from the light of nature, or from the works of Providence, that there is love in God, however they may adorn them in elegant affecting expressions; yet from them no man can know that 'God is love.' In the revelation hereof Christ hath the pre-eminence; nor can any man comprehend any thing of it aright but in him. It is that which the whole light of the creation cannot discover; for it is the spring and centre of the mystery of godliness.

These things are of the deep things of God, such as belong unto that wisdom of God in a mystery, which they

that are carnal cannot receive, as the apostle testifies, 1 Cor. ii. 14. But the meanest believer who lives in the exercise of faith, may have an understanding of them so far as is needful unto his love and obedience. The sum of the whole is this; if you would behold the glory of Christ, as the great means of your sanctification and consolation, as the only preparation for the beholding of his glory in eternal blessedness; consider what of God is made known and represented unto you in him, wherein God purposed and designed to glorify himself in him. Now this is all that may be known of God in a saving manner; especially his wisdom, his love, his goodness, grace, and mercy, whereon the life of our souls doth depend; and the Lord Christ being appointed the only way and means hereof, how exceeding glorious must he be in the eyes of them that do believe!

These things being premised, I shall close this first consideration of that glory of Christ which we behold by faith in this world, with some such observations, as may excite us unto the practice of this great duty, and improvement of this great privilege; the greatest which on this side heaven we can be made partakers of.

There are some who regard not these things at all, but rather despise them. They never entertain any serious thoughts of obtaining a view of the glory of God in Christ, which is to be unbelievers. They look on him as a teacher that came forth from God to reveal his will, and to teach us his worship; and so indeed he was. But this they say was the sole use of his person in religion, which is Mahometism. The manifestation of all the holy properties of the divine nature, with the representation of them unto angels above, and the church in this world, as he is the image of the invisible God, in the constitution of his person, and the discharge of his office, are things they regard not; yea, they despise and scorn what is professed concerning them; for pride and contempt of others were always the safest covert of ignorance; otherwise it would seem strange, that men should openly boast of their own blindness. But these conceptions of men's minds are influenced by that unbelief of his divine person, which maketh havoc of Christianity at this day in the world.

I speak of them whose minds are better disposed to-

wards heavenly things; and unto them I say, Wherefore do you love Jesus Christ? for so you profess to do. Wherefore do you trust in him? Wherefore do you honour him? Wherefore do you desire to be in heaven with him? Can you give a reason of this hope that is in you? an account why you do all or any of these things? If you cannot, all that you pretend towards him, is but fancy and imagination; you fight uncertainly as men beating the air; or is one of your reasons hereof, that in him you do by faith behold that glory of God, with the holy properties of his nature, and their principal operations, in order unto your own salvation and blessedness, which otherwise would have been eternally hid from you? Hereon is he 'precious unto them that do believe.'

Let us therefore, as many as are spiritual, be thus minded. Let us make use of this privilege with rejoicing, and be found in the discharge of this duty with diligence. For thus to behold the glory of Christ, is both our privilege and our duty. The duties of the law were a burden and a yoke; but those of the gospel are privileges and advantages.

It is a promise concerning the days of the New Testament, that our 'eyes shall see the King in his beauty;' Isa. xxxiii. 17. We shall behold the glory of Christ in its lustre and excellency. What is this beauty of the King of saints? Is it not, that God is in him, and he is the great representative of his glory unto us? Wherefore, in the contemplation of this glory consists the principal exercise of faith. And who can declare the glory of this privilege, that we who are born in darkness, and deserved to be cast out into utter darkness, should be 'translated into this marvellous light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?'

What are all the stained glories, the fading beauties of this world? Of all that the devil shewed our Saviour from the mount? What are they in comparison of one view of the glory of God represented in Christ, and of the glory of Christ as his great representative?

The most pernicious effect of unbelief under the preaching of the gospel is, that together with an influence of power from Satan, 'it blinds the eyes of men's minds, that

they should not see this glory of Christ,' whereon they perish eternally; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But the most of those who at this day are called Christians, are strangers unto this duty. Our Lord Jesus Christ told the Pharisees, that notwithstanding all their boasting of the knowledge of God, they had not 'heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape;' that is, as Moses did. They had no real acquaintance with him, they had no spiritual view of his glory; and so it is amongst ourselves. Notwithstanding the general profession that is of the knowledge of Christ, they are but few who thus behold his glory; and therefore few who are transformed into his image and likeness.

Some men speak much of the imitation of Christ, and following of his example; and it were well if we could see more of it really in effect. But no man shall ever become 'like unto him,' by bare imitation of his actions, without that view or intuition of his glory, which alone is accompanied with a transforming power to change them into the same image.

The truth is, the best of us all are wofully defective in this duty, and many are discouraged from it because a pretence of it in some hath degenerated into superstition; but we are loath at any time seriously to engage in it, and come with an unwilling kind of willingness, unto the exercise of our minds in it.

Thoughts of this glory of Christ are too high for us, or too hard for us, such as we cannot long delight in; we turn away from them with a kind of weariness; yet are they of the same nature in general with our beholding of the glory of Christ in heaven, wherein there shall be no weariness or satiety unto eternity. Is not the cause of it, that we are unspiritual or carnal, having our thoughts and affections wonted to give entertainment unto other things? For this is the principal cause of our unreadiness and incapacity to exercise our minds in and about the great mysteries of the gospel; 1 Cor. iii. 1—3. And it is so with us moreover, because we do not stir up ourselves with watchfulness and diligence in continual actings of faith on this blessed object. This is that which keeps many of us at so low

an ebb, as unto the powers of a heavenly life, and spiritual joys.

Did we abound in this duty, in this exercise of faith, our life in walking before God would be more sweet and pleasant unto us; our spiritual light and strength would have a daily increase; we should more represent the glory of Christ in our ways and walking, than usually we do; and death itself would be most welcome unto us.

The angels themselves desire to look into the things of the glory of Christ; 1 Pet. i. 10. 12. There is in them matter of inquiry and instruction for the most high and holy spirits in heaven. The manifold wisdom of God in them is made known unto 'principalities and powers in heavenly places by the church;' Eph. iii. 10. And shall we neglect that which is the object of angelical diligence to inquire into; especially considering that we are more than they concerned in it?

Is Christ then thus glorious in our eyes? Do we see the Father in him, or by seeing of him? Do we sedulously, daily contemplate on the wisdom, love, grace, goodness, holiness, and righteousness of God, as revealing and manifesting themselves in him? Do we sufficiently consider, that the immediate vision of this glory in heaven will be our everlasting blessedness? Doth the imperfect view which we have of it here, increase our desires after the perfect sight of it above? With respect unto these inquiries, I shall briefly speak unto sundry sorts of men.

Some will say they understand not these things, nor any concernment of their own in them. If they are true, yet are they notions which they may safely be without the knowledge of; for so far as they can discern, they have no influence on Christian practice, or duties of morality. And the preaching of them doth but take off the minds of men from more necessary duties. But 'if the gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that perish.' And unto the objection I say,

1. Nothing is more fully and clearly revealed in the gospel, than that unto us Jesus Christ is the 'image of the invisible God;' that he is the character of the person of the Father, so as that in seeing him, we see the Father also; that we have the 'light of the knowledge of the glory of God

in his face' alone, as hath been proved. This is the principal fundamental mystery and truth of the gospel; and which, if it be not received, believed, owned, all other truths are useless unto our souls. To refer all the testimonies that are given hereunto, to the doctrine which he taught, in contradistinction unto his person as acting in the discharge of his office, is antievangelical, antichristian, turning the whole gospel into a fable.

2. It is so, that the light of faith is given unto us principally to enable us to behold the glory of God in Christ; to contemplate on it, as unto all the ends of its manifestation. So is it expressly affirmed, 2 Cor. iv. 6. If we have not this light, as it is communicated by the power of God unto them that do believe, Eph. i. 17—19. we must be strangers unto the whole mystery of the gospel; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

3. That in the beholding of the glory of God in Christ, we behold his glory also. For herein is he infinitely glorious above the whole creation, in that in and by him alone the glory of the invisible God is represented unto us. Herein do our souls live. This is that whereby the image of God is renewed in us, and we are made like unto the firstborn.

4. This is so far from being unnecessary unto Christian practice, and the sanctified duties of morality, that he knows not Christ, he knows not the gospel, he knows not the faith of the Catholic church, who imagines that they can be performed acceptably without it. Yea, this is the root whence all other Christian duties do spring, and whereon they grow, whereby they are distinguished from the works of heathens. He is no Christian who believes not that faith in the person of Christ is the spring of all evangelical obedience; or who knows not that faith respects the revelation of the glory of God in him.

If these things are so, as they are the most important truths of the gospel, and whose denial overthrows the foundation of faith, and is ruinous to Christian religion, certainly it is our duty to live in the constant exercise of faith with respect unto this glory of Christ. And we have sufficient experience of what kind of morality the ignorance of it hath produced.

Others there are who may be some way strangers, but are no way enemies unto this mystery, and to the practical exercise of faith therein: unto such I shall tender the ensuing directions.

1. Reckon in your minds, that this beholding of the glory of Christ by beholding the glory of God, and all his holy properties in him, is the greatest privilege whereof in this life we can be made partakers. The dawning of heaven is in it, and the first-fruits of glory; for this is life eternal to know the Father, and whom he hath sent, Christ Jesus; John xvii. 3. Unless you value it, unless you esteem it as such a privilege, you will not enjoy it; and that which is not valued according unto its worth, is despised. It is not enough to think it a privilege, an advantage; but it is to be valued above other things according unto its greatness and excellency. 'Destruction and death say, we have heard the fame of it with our ears;' Job xxviii. 22. And if we do no more, we shall die strangers unto it; we are to 'cry after this knowledge, and lift up our voice for this understanding,' if we design to attain it.

2. As it is a great privilege which requires a due valuation, so it is a great mystery which requires much spiritual wisdom to the right understanding of it, and to direct in its practice; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. Flesh and blood will not reveal it unto us, but we must be taught of God, to apprehend it; John i. 12, 13. Matt. xvi. 16, 17. Mere unsanctified reason will never enable us unto, nor guide us in, the discovery of this duty. Men are not so vain as to hope for skill and understanding in the mystery of a secular art or trade, without the diligent use of those means whereby it may be attained; and shall we suppose that we may be furnished with spiritual skill and wisdom in this sacred mystery, without diligence in the use of the means appointed of God for the attaining of it? The principal of them is fervent prayer. Pray then with Moses, that God would 'shew you this his glory;' pray with the apostle, that 'the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened to behold it;' pray that the 'God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Fill your minds with spiritual thoughts and contrivances about them. Slothful and lazy souls never obtain

one view of this glory; the 'lion in the way' deters them from attempting it. Being carnal they abhor all diligence in the use of spiritual means, such as prayer and meditation on things unto them uneasy, unpleasing, and difficult. Unto others the way partakes of the nature of the end; the means of obtaining a view of the glory of Christ are of the same kind, of the same pleasantness, with that view itself in their proportion.

3. Learn the use hereof from the actings of contrary vicious habits. When the minds of men are vehemently fixed on the pursuit of their lusts, they will be continually ruminating on the objects of them, and have a thousand contrivances about them, until their 'eyes become full of an adulteress, and they cannot cease from sinning,' as the apostle speaks. The objects of their lusts have framed and raised an image of themselves in their minds, and transformed them into their own likeness. Is this the way of them who 'go down to the chambers of death?' Do they thus frame their souls, and make them meet for destruction, until their words, gestures, actions, proclaim the frame of their minds unto all that look upon them? And shall we be slothful and negligent in the contemplation of that glory which transforms our minds into its own likeness, so as that the eyes of our understandings shall be continually filled with it, until we see him and behold him continually, so as never to cease from the holy acts of delight in him, and love unto him?

4. Would we then behold the glory of God as he manifesteth it in and by the holy properties of his nature, with their blessed operations and effects, without which we have nothing of the power of religion in us, whatever we pretend; this alone is the way of it. Go to the whole creation and all things contained in it; they can say no more, but 'we have heard the fame and report of these things,' and what we have heard we declare; but it is but a little portion of them that we are acquainted withal. 'The heavens' indeed 'declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. The invisible things of God are understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.' But comparatively, it is but little that we can hence learn of these things, as unto that we may behold of them in Christ Jesus. How blind herein was the best philo-

sopher in comparison of the meanest of the apostles, yea, of him who is least in the kingdom of heaven?

But herein it is required, that we rest not in the notion of this truth, and a bare assent unto the doctrine of it. The affecting power of it upon our hearts, is that which we should aim at. Wherein doth the blessedness of the saints above consist? Is it not herein, that they behold and see the glory of God in Christ? And what is the effect of it upon those blessed souls? Doth it not change them into the same image, or make them like unto Christ? Doth it not fill and satiate them with joy, rest, delight, complacency, and ineffable satisfaction? Do we expect, do we desire, the same state of blessedness? It is our present view of the glory of Christ which is our initiation thereinto, if we are exercised in it, until we have an experience of its transforming power in our souls.

These things are, it may be, of little use unto some. Such as are babes in spiritual knowledge and understanding, either because they are carnal, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. or slothful in hearing, Heb. v. 12—14. are not capable of these divine mysteries. And therefore, the apostle did in an especial manner declare this wisdom of God in a mystery unto them that were perfect; 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7. that is, who were more grown in spiritual knowledge, and had their 'senses exercised to discern good and evil.' It is unto them who are exercised in the contemplation of invisible things, who delight to walk in the more retired paths of faith and love, to whom they are precious.

Some few inferences from the whole of what hath been declared, shall put a close to this part of our discourse.

1. The holy properties of the divine nature are not only represented unto our faith in Christ, as unto their own essential glory, but as they are in the exercise of their powers for the salvation of the church. In him do we behold the wisdom, goodness, love, grace, mercy, and power of God, acting themselves in the contrivance, constitution, and efficacious accomplishment of the great work of our redemption and salvation. This gives, as unto us, an unutterable lustre unto the native amiableness of the divine excellencies. The wisdom and love of God are in themselves infinitely glorious, infinitely amiable; nothing can be added unto them,

those who boasted themselves to be wise among the heathen embraced and improved. They did but fluctuate in their minds, they did not transform them into the image and likeness of God, as the saving knowledge of him doth; Col. iii. 10.

So the apostle expresseth this truth; 'Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Gentiles seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God;' 1 Cor. i. 20—24.

After it was evident unto all, that the world, the wise, the studious, the contemplative part of it, in the wisdom of God disposing them into that condition, wherein they were left unto themselves, in their own wisdom, their natural light and reason did not, could not, come to the saving knowledge of God, but were puffed up into a contempt of the only way of the revelation of himself, as weakness and folly; it pleased God then to manifest all their wisdom to be folly; and to establish the only means of the knowledge of himself in Christ Jesus.

CHAP. III.

The glory of Christ in the mysterious constitution of his person.

The second thing wherein we may behold the glory of Christ given him of his Father, is in the mysterious constitution of his person, as he is God and man in one and the same person. There are in him, in his one single, individual person, two distinct natures; the one eternal, infinite, immense, almighty, the form and essence of God; the other having a beginning in time, finite, limited, confined unto a certain place, which is our nature, which he took on him,

when he was 'made flesh and dwelt among us.' The declaration of the nature of this glory, is a part of my discourse of the person of Christ, whereunto I refer the reader: my present design is of another nature.

This is that glory whose beams are so illustrious, as that the blind world cannot bear the light and beauty of them. Multitudes begin openly to deny this incarnation of the Son of God, this personal union of God and man in their distinct natures. They deny that there is either glory or truth in it; and it will ere long appear, it begins already to evidence itself what greater multitudes there are, who yet do not, who yet dare not, openly reject the doctrine of it, who in truth believe it not, nor see any glory in it. Howbeit this glory is the glory of our religion, the glory of the church, the sole rock whereon it is built, the only spring of present grace, and future glory.

This is that glory which the angels themselves desire to behold, the mystery whereof they 'bow down to look into;' 1 Pet. i. 12. So was their desire represented by the cherubims in the most holy place of the tabernacle; for they were a shadow of the ministry of angels in the church. The ark and the mercy-seat were a type of Christ in the discharge of his office; and these cherubims were made standing over them, as being in heaven above; but earnestly looking down upon them in a posture of reverence and adoration. So they did of old, and in their present contemplation of it consists no small part of their eternal blessedness.

Hereon depends the ruin of Satan and his kingdom. His sin, so far as we can conceive, consisted of two parts: 1. His pride against the person of the Son of God, by whom he was created. 'For by him were all things created that are' (or were when first created) 'in heaven, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers;' Col. i. 16. Against him he lifted up himself, which was the beginning of his transgression. 2. Envy against mankind made in the image of God, of the Son of God the first-born. This completed his sin; nothing was now left whereon to act his his pride and malice. Unto his eternal confusion and ruin, God in infinite wisdom unites both the natures he had sinned against, in the one person of the Son, who was the first object of his pride and malice. Hereby his destruction is

attended with everlasting shame in the discovery of his folly, wherein he would have contended with infinite wisdom, as well as misery, by the powers of the two natures united in one person.

Here lies the foundation of the church. The foundation of the whole old creation was laid in an act of absolute sovereign power. Hereby God 'hanged the earth upon nothing.' But the foundation of the church is on this mysterious immoveable rock; 'thou art Christ the Son of the living God;' on the most intimate conjunction of the two natures, the divine and human, in themselves infinitely distant in the same person.

We may name one place wherein it is gloriously represented unto us; Isa. ix. 6. 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be on his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.' Here must the whole church fall down and worship the author of this wonderful contrivance, and captivating their understandings unto the obedience of faith, humbly adore what they cannot comprehend.

This was obscurely represented unto the church of old; Exod. iii. 2—6. 'And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham,' &c.

This fire was a type or declaration of the presence of God in the person of the Son. For with respect unto the Father he is called an angel, the angel of the covenant; but absolutely in himself, he was Jehovah, the 'God of Abraham,' &c. And of his presence the fire was a proper representation. For in his nature, he is as a 'consuming fire;' and his present work was the delivery of the church out of a fiery trial. This fire placed itself in a bush, where

it burned, but the bush was not consumed. And although the continuance of the fire in the bush, was but for a short season, a present appearance; yet thence was God said to dwell in the bush; 'The good will of him that dwelt in the bush;' Deut. xxxiii. 16. And this is so spoken, because the being of the fire in the bush for a season, was a type of him in whom 'the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily,' and that for ever; Col. ii. 9. Of him who was 'made flesh and dwelt among us;' John i. 14. The eternal fire of the divine nature, dwells in the bush of our frail nature, yet is not consumed thereby. God thus dwells in this bush, with all his good will towards sinners.

Moses looked on this sight as a marvellous and wonderous thing. And if it were so in the type, what is it in the truth, substance, and reality of it?

And by direction given unto him, to 'put off his shoes,' we are taught to cast away all fleshly imaginations and carnal affections, that by pure acts of faith, we may behold this glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.

I design not here to insist on the explication, or confirmation of this glorious truth, concerning the constitution of the person of Christ, in and by his incarnation. What I can comprehend, what I do believe concerning it, I have fully declared in a large peculiar treatise. Here I take the truth itself as known, or as it may be thence learned. My present business is only to stir up the minds of believers unto a due contemplation of the glory of Christ in the sacred, mysterious constitution of his person, as God and man in one. So much as we abide herein, so much do 'we live by the faith of the Son of God;' and God can by a spirit of wisdom and revelation, open the eyes of our understandings, that we may behold this glory unto our ineffable consolation and joy. And unto the diligent discharge of our duty herein, I shall offer the ensuing directions.

1. Let us get it fixed on our souls and in our minds, that this glory of Christ in the divine constitution of his person, is the best, the most noble, useful, beneficial object, that we can be conversant about in our thoughts, or cleave unto in our affections.

What are all other things in comparison of the 'knowledge of Christ?' In the judgment of the great apostle, they

are but 'loss and dung;' Phil. iii. 8—10. So they were to him, and if they are not so to us, we are carnal.

What is the world, and what are the things thereof, which most men spend their thoughts about, and fix their affections on? The psalmist gives his judgment about them, in comparison of a view of this glory of Christ, Psal. iv. 6. 'Many say, Who will shew us any good?' Who will give and help us to attain so much in and of this world, as will give rest and satisfaction unto our minds? That is the good inquired after. But, saith he, 'Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us.' The light of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus, is that satisfactory good alone, which I desire and seek after.

The Scripture reproacheth the vanity and folly of the minds of men, in that 'they spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which profiteth not.' They engage the vigour of their spirits about perishing things, when they have durable substance and riches proposed unto them.

How do men for the most part exercise their minds? What are they conversant about in their thoughts?

Some by them 'make provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof,' as Rom. xiii. 14. They search about continually in their thoughts for objects suited unto their lusts and carnal affections, coining, framing, and stamping of them in their imaginations. They fix their eyes with delight on toads and serpents, with all noisome filthy objects; refusing in the mean time, to behold the beauty and glory of the light of the sun. So is it with all that spend their thoughts about the objects of their sinful pleasures, refusing to look up after one view of this glory of Christ.

Some keep their thoughts in continual exercise about the things of this world, as unto the advantages and emoluments which they expect from them. Hereby are they transformed into the image of the world, becoming earthly, carnal, and vain. Is it because there is 'no God in Israel that these applications are made unto the idol of Ekron?' That there is no glory, no desirableness in Christ for men to inquire after, and fix their minds upon? O the blindness, the darkness, the folly of poor sinners! Whom do they despise, and for what?

Some of more refined parts and notional minds, do arise unto a sedulous meditation on the works of creation and providence. Hence many excellent discourses on that subject adorned with eloquence, are published among us. And a work this is worthy of our nature, and suited unto our rational capacities; yea, the first end of our natural endowment with them. But in all these things there is no glory in comparison of what is proposed unto us in the mysterious constitution of the person of Christ. The sun hath no glory, the moon and stars no beauty, the order and influence of the heavenly bodies have no excellency in comparison of it.

This is that which the psalmist designs to declare, Psal. viii. 'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou hast made him to have dominion over the work of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.'

He is engaged in a contemplation of the glory of God in his works; and he concludes that the fabric of heaven, with the moon and stars, the rain (for it was his meditation by night, when he beheld them) was exceeding glorious, and greatly to be admired. This casts his thoughts on the poor, weak, infirm nature of man, which seems as nothing in comparison of those glories above: but immediately hereon falls into an admiration of the wisdom, goodness, and love of God, exalting that nature incomparably above all the works of creation in the person of Jesus Christ, as the apostle expounds this place, Heb. ii. 5, 6.

This therefore is the highest, the best, the most useful object of our thoughts and affections. He who hath had a real view of this glory, though he know himself to be a poor, sinful, dying worm of the earth, yet would he not be an angel in heaven, if thereby he should lose the sight of it; for this is the centre wherein all the lines of the manifestation of the divine glory do meet and rest.

Look unto the things of this world, wives, children, pos-

sessions, estates, power, friends, and honour; how amiable are they! How desirable unto the thoughts of the most of men! But he who hath obtained a view of the glory of Christ, will in the midst of them all say, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? There is none on earth that I desire besides thee;' Psal. lxxiii. 25. 'For who in the heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty, can be compared unto the Lord?' Psal. lxxxix. 6.

He himself, out of his infinite love and ineffable condescension, upon the sight and view of his church, and his own graces in her, wherewith she is adorned, doth say, 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck;' Cant. iv. 8. How much more ought a believing soul, upon a view of the glory of Christ, in whom it pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell, to say, Thou hast ravished my heart, taken it away from me. 'O thou whom my soul loveth,' one glance of thy glorious beauty upon me, hath quite overcome me, hath left no heart in me, unto things here below? If it be not thus with us frequently, if we value not this object of our minds and affections, if we are not diligent in looking up unto him, to behold his glory, it is because we are carnal, and not in any good measure partakers of the promise, that 'our eyes shall see the king in his beauty.'

2. Our second direction unto the same end is, that we diligently study the Scripture, and the revelations that are made of this glory of Christ therein. To behold it, is not a work of fancy or imagination; it is not conversing with an image framed by the art of men without, or that of our own fancy within; but of faith exercised on divine revelations. This direction he gives us himself, John v. 39. 'Search the Scriptures, for they are they that testify of me.' The way whereby this is done, is fully set before us in the example of the holy prophets under the Old Testament, 1 Pet. i. 11—13.

This principle is always to be retained in our minds in reading of the Scripture, namely, that the revelation and doctrine of the person of Christ and his office, is the foundation whereon all other instructions of the prophets and apostles for the edification of the church are built, and

the Scripture full of refreshment unto us, as a spring of living water, when we are taken into blessed views of the glory of Christ therein. And we are in the best frame of duty, when the principal motive in our minds to contend earnestly for retaining the possession of the Scripture, against all that would deprive us of it, or discourage us from a daily diligent search into it, is this, that they would take from us the only glass wherein we may behold the glory of Christ. This is the glory of the Scripture, that it is the great, yea, the only outward means of representing unto us the glory of Christ; and he is the sun in the firmament of it, which only hath light in itself, and communicates it unto all other things besides.

3. Another direction unto this same end, is, that having attained the light of the knowledge of the glory of Christ from the Scripture, or by the dispensation of the truth in the preaching of the gospel, we would esteem it our duty frequently to meditate thereon.

Want hereof is that fundamental mistake, which keeps many among us so low in their grace, so regardless of their privileges. They hear of these things, they assent unto their truth, at least they do not gainsay them; but they never solemnly meditate upon them. This they esteem a work that is above them, or are ignorant totally of it, or esteem themselves not much concerned in it, or dislike it as fanaticism. For it is that which no considerations can engage a carnal mind to delight in. The mind must be spiritual and holy, freed from earthly affections and encumbrances, raised above things here below, that can in a due manner meditate on the glory of Christ. Therefore are the most strangers unto this duty, because they will not be at the trouble and charge of that mortification of earthly affections, that extirpation of sensual inclinations, that retirement from the occasions of life, which are required thereunto. See the Treatise of Spiritual-mindedness.

It is to be feared that there are some who profess religion with an appearance of strictness, who never separate themselves from all other occasions to meditate on Christ and his glory. And yet with a strange inconsistency of apprehensions, they will profess that they desire nothing more, than to behold his glory in heaven for ever. But it is evi-

dent even in the light of reason, that these things are irreconcilable. It is impossible that he who never meditates with delight on the glory of Christ here in this world, who labours not to behold it by faith as it is revealed in the Scripture, should ever have any real gracious desire to behold it in heaven. They may love and desire the fruition of their own imaginations; they cannot do so of the glory of Christ, whereof they are ignorant, and wherewith they are unacquainted. It is, therefore, to be lamented, that men can find time for, and have inclinations to think and meditate on other things, it may be earthly and vain; but have neither heart, nor inclination, nor leisure to meditate on this glorious object. What is the faith and love which such men profess? How will they find themselves deceived in the issue!

4. Let your occasional thoughts of Christ be many, and multiplied every day. He is not far from us; we may make a speedy address unto him at any time. So the apostle informs us, Rom. x. 6—8. 'Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above)? or, Who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)? For the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.' The things that Christ did, were done at a distance from us, and they are long since past. But saith the apostle, 'the word' of the gospel wherein these things are revealed, and whereby an application is made of them unto our souls, 'is nigh unto us, even in our hearts;' that is, if we are true believers, and have mixed the word with faith; and so it exhibiteth Christ and all the benefits of his mediation unto us. If, therefore, this word is in our hearts, Christ is nigh unto us. If we turn at any time into ourselves to converse with the word that abideth in us, there we shall find him ready to receive us into communion with himself; that is, in the light of the knowledge of Christ which we have by the word, we may have sudden, occasional thoughts of him continually; and where our minds and affections are so filled with other things, that we are not ready for converse with him who is thus nigh unto us by the word, we are spiritually indisposed.

So to manifest how nigh he is unto us, it is said that 'he stands at the door and knocks;' Rev. iii. 20. in the continual tender that he makes of himself and his grace unto

our souls. For he is always accompanied with the glorious train of his graces, and if they are not received, he himself is not so. It is to no purpose to boast of Christ, if we have not an evidence of his graces in our hearts and lives. But unto whom he is the hope of future glory, unto them he is the life of present grace.

Sometimes it may be, that he is withdrawn from us, so as that we cannot hear his voice, nor behold his countenance, nor obtain any sense of his love, though we seek him with diligence. In this state, all our thoughts and meditations concerning him will be barren and fruitless, bringing in no spiritual refreshment into our souls. And if we learn to be content with such lifeless, inaffecting thoughts of him, as bring in no experience of his love, nor give us a real view of the glory of his person, we shall wither away as unto all the power of religion.

What is our duty in this case, is so fully expressed by the spouse in the Canticles, as represents it plainly unto the minds of believers, who have any experience of these things; chap. iii. 1—5. 'By night, on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways, I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me, to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go.' The like account she gives of herself, and of her behaviour on the like occasion, chap. v. 2—8.

This is the substance of what by this example we are instructed unto. The Lord Christ is pleased sometimes to withdraw himself from the spiritual experience of believers; as unto any refreshing sense of his love, or the fresh communications of consolitory graces. Those who never had experience of any such thing, who never had any refreshing communion with him, cannot be sensible of his absence; they never were so of his presence. But those whom he hath visited, to whom he hath given of his loves, with whom he hath made his abode, whom he hath refreshed, relieved, and comforted, in whom he hath lived in the power of his

grace, they know what it is to be forsaken by him, though but for a moment. And their trouble is increased, when they seek him with diligence in the wonted ways of obtaining his presence, and cannot find him. Our duty in this case, is, to persevere in our inquiries after him in prayer, meditation, mourning, reading and hearing of the word, in all ordinances of divine worship, private and public, in diligent obedience, until we find him, or he return unto us, as in former days.

It were well if all churches and professors now would manifest the same diligence herein, as did the church of old in this example. Many of them, if they are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, cannot but be sensible that the Lord Christ is variously withdrawn from them, if ever they had experience of the power of his presence. Yet are the generality of them far from the frame of heart here described in the spouse; for they are slothful, careless, negligent, and stir not up themselves to inquire after him, or his return unto their souls. So was it with Laodicea of old, so was it with Sardis, and so it is to be feared, that it is with many at present. But to return.

Generally, Christ is nigh unto believers, and of a ready access; and the principal actings of the life of faith, consist in the frequency of our thoughts concerning him; for hereby Christ liveth in us, as he is said to do, Gal. ii. 20. This we cannot do, unless we have frequent thoughts of him, and converse with him. It is often said among men, that one lives in another; this cannot be but where the affections of one are so engaged unto another, that night and day he thinks of him, and is thereby, as it were, present with him. So ought it to be between Christ and believers. He dwells in them by faith; but the actings of this life in them (as wherever life is, it will be in act and exercise) are proportionable unto their thoughts of him, and delight in him.

If, therefore, we would behold the glory of Christ, the present direction is, that on all occasions, and frequently when there are no occasions for it by the performance of other duties, we would abound in thoughts of him and his glory. I intend not at present fixed and stated meditations, which were spoken unto before; but such thoughts as are more transient, according as our opportunities are. And a

great rebuke it ought to be unto us, when Christ hath at any time in a day, been long out of our minds. The spouse affirms, that 'ere she was aware, her soul made her as the chariots of Amminadab;' Cant. vi. 12. It so fell out, that when she had no thoughts, no design, or purpose for attendance on communion with Christ, that she was surprised into a readiness and willingness unto it. So it will be with them that love him in sincerity. Their own souls, without previous designs or outward occasions, will frequently engage them in holy thoughts of him, which is the most eminent character of a truly spiritual Christian.

4. The next direction is, that all our thoughts concerning Christ and his glory, should be accompanied with admiration, adoration, and thanksgiving. For this is such an object of our thoughts and affections, as in this life we can never fully comprehend; an ocean whose depths we cannot look into. If we are spiritually renewed, all the faculties of our souls are enabled by grace to exert their respective powers towards this glorious object. This must be done in various duties, by the exercise of various graces, as they are to be acted by the distinct powers of the faculties of our minds. This is that which is intended, where we are commanded 'to love the Lord with all our souls, with all our minds, with all our strength.' All the distinct powers of our souls, are to be acted by distinct graces and duties, in cleaving unto God by love. In heaven, when we are come to our centre, that state of rest and blessedness which our nature is ultimately capable of, nothing but one infinite invariable object of our minds and affections received by vision, can render that state uninterrupted and unchangeable. But whilst we are here, we know or see but in part, and we must also act our faith and love, on part of that glory, which is not at once entirely proposed unto us, and which as yet we cannot comprehend. Wherefore, we must act various graces in great variety about it; some at one time, some at another, according unto the powers of all our renewed faculties. Of this sort, are those mentioned of adoration, admiration, and thanksgiving; which are those acts of our minds wherein all others do issue, when the object is incomprehensible. For unto them we are enabled by grace,

One end of his illustrious coming unto the judgment of the last day, is, that he may be 'admired in all them that believe;' 2 Thess. i. 11. Even believers themselves shall be filled with an overwhelming admiration upon his glorious appearance. Or if the meaning be, not that he shall be admired by them, but admired in them, because of the mighty works of his grace and power in their redemption, sanctification, resurrection, and glory, it is to the same purpose, he 'comes to be admired.' And according to the prospect which we have of that glory, ought our admiration to be.

And this admiration will issue in adoration and thanksgiving; whereof we have an eminent instance and example in the whole church of the redeemed, Rev. v. 9—14. 'They sang a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to receive the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast bought us unto God by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign upon the earth. And I saw and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and of the living creatures, and of the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature that is in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and that are in the sea, and all things in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and power, and glory, be unto him that sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.'

The design of this discourse is no more, but that when by faith we have attained a view of the glory of Christ, in our contemplations on his person, we should not pass it over as a notion of truth which we assent unto, namely, that he is thus glorious in himself; but endeavour to affect our hearts with it, as that wherein our own principal interest doth lie; wherein it will be effectual unto the transformation of our souls into his image.

But some, it may be, will say, at least I fear some may truly say, that these things do not belong unto them, they do not find that ever they had any benefit by them; they hope to be saved as well as others by the mediation of

Christ; but as unto this beholding of his glory by constant meditation and actings of faith therein, they know nothing of it, nor are concerned in it. The doctrine which they are taught out of the Scripture concerning the person of Christ, they give their assent unto; but his glory they hope they shall see in another world, here they never yet inquired after it.

So it will be. It is well if these things be not only neglected, because the minds of men are carnal, and cannot discern spiritual things; but also despised, because they have an enmity unto them. It is not for all to walk in these retired paths. Not for them who are negligent and slothful, whose minds are earthly and carnal. Nor can they herein sit at the feet of Christ with Mary, when she chose the better part, who, like Martha, are cumbered about many things here in this world. Those whose principal design is to add unto their present enjoyments (in the midst of the prosecution whereof, they are commonly taken from them, so as that their thoughts do perish, because not accomplished), will never understand these things. Much less will they do so, whose work it is to make provision for the flesh to fulfil it in the lusts thereof.

They must make it their design to be heavenly-minded, who will find a relish in these things. Those who are strangers unto holy meditation in general, will be strangers unto this mystery in a peculiar manner.

Some men can think of the world, of their relations, and the manifold occasions of life; but as unto the things that are above and within the veil, they are not concerned in them.

With some it is otherwise. They profess their desire to behold the glory of Christ by faith; but they find it, as they complain, too high and difficult for them. They are at a loss in their minds, and even overwhelmed, when they begin to view his glory. They are like the disciples, who saw him in his transfiguration; they were filled with amazement, and knew not what to say, or said they knew not what. And I do acknowledge, that the weakness of our minds in the comprehension of this eternal glory of Christ, and their instability in meditations thereon, whence we cannot steadfastly look on it, or behold it, gives us an afflicting,

abasing consideration of our present state and condition. And I shall say no more unto this case but this alone: when faith can no longer hold open the eyes of our understandings unto the beholding the sun of righteousness shining in his beauty, nor exercise orderly thoughts about this incomprehensible object, it will betake itself unto that holy admiration which we have spoken unto; and therein it will put itself forth in pure acts of love and complacency.

CHAP. IV.

The glory of Christ in his susception of the office of a mediator. First in his condescension.

THE things whereof we have thus far discoursed, relating immediately unto the person of Christ in itself, may seem to have somewhat of difficulty in them, unto such whose minds are not duly exercised in the contemplation of heavenly things. Unto others they are evident in their own experience, and instructive unto them that are willing to learn. That which remains will be yet more plain unto the understanding and capacity of the meanest believer. And this is the glory of Christ in his office of mediator, and the discharge thereof.

In our beholding of the glory of Christ herein, doth the exercise of faith in this life principally consist; so the apostle declares it, Phil. iii. 8—12. 'Yea, doubtless and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.—To know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, and to be made conformable unto his death.' This, therefore, we must treat of somewhat more at large.

'There is one God,' saith the apostle, 'and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;' 1 Tim. ii. 5. In that great difference between God and man occasioned by our sin and apostacy from him, which of itself could issue in nothing but the utter ruin of the whole race of mankind, there was none in heaven or earth in their original nature

and operations, who was meet or able to make up a righteous peace between them. Yet must this be done by a mediator, or cease for ever.

This mediator could not be God himself absolutely considered; 'for a mediator is not of one, but God is one;' Gal. iii. 20. Whatever God might do herein in a way of sovereign grace, yet he could not do it in the way of mediation, which yet was necessary unto his own glory, as we have at large discoursed elsewhere.

And as for creatures, there was none in heaven or earth that was meet to undertake this office. 'For if one man sin against another, the judge shall judge herein; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?' 1 Sam. ii. 25. 'There is not any daysman betwixt us to lay his hand upon us both;' Job ix. 33.

In this state of things the Lord Christ, as the Son of God, said, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; sacrifice and burnt-offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me; and lo, I come to do thy will;' Heb. x. 5—9. By the assumption of our nature into union with himself, in his own divine person he became every way meet for the discharge of this office, and undertakes it accordingly.

That which we inquire after at present, is, the glory of Christ herein, and how we may behold that glory. And there are three things wherein we may take a prospect of it.

1. In his susception of this office.

2. In his discharge of it.

3. In the event and consequence thereof, or what ensued thereon.

In the susception of this office we may behold the glory of Christ, 1. In his condescension. 2. In his love.

1. We may behold this glory in his infinite condescension to take this office on him, and our nature to be his own unto that end. It did not befall him by lot or chance; it was not imposed on him against his will; it belonged not unto him by any necessity of nature or condition, he stood not in need of it; it was no addition unto him; but of his own mind and accord he graciously condescended unto the susception and discharge of it.

So the apostle expresseth it, Phil. ii. 5—8. 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in

the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took on him-self the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'

It was the mind that was in Jesus Christ, which is proposed unto our consideration and imitation. What he was inclined and disposed unto from himself and his own mind alone. And that in general which is ascribed unto him is ἐκένωσις, exinanition or self-emptying; he emptied himself. This the ancient church called his συγκατάβασις, as we do his condescension, an act of which kind in God is called the 'humbling of himself;' Psal. cxiii. 6.

Wherefore, the susception of our nature for the discharge of the office of mediation therein, was an infinite condescension in the Son of God, wherein he is exceedingly glorious in the eyes of believers.

And I shall do these three things: 1. Shew in general the greatness of his condescension. 2. Declare the especial nature of it. And, 3. Take what view we are able of the glory of Christ therein.

1. Such is the transcendent excellency of the divine nature, that it is said of God, that 'he dwelleth on high, and humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth;' Psal. cxiii. 5, 6. He condescends from the prerogative of his excellency to behold, to look upon, to take notice of, the most glorious things in heaven above, and the greatest things in the earth below. All his respect unto the creatures, the most glorious of them, is an act of infinite condescension. And it is so on two accounts.

1. Because of the infinite distance that is between his essence, nature, or being, and that of the creatures. Hence 'all nations before him, are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; yea, that they are as nothing, that they are accounted unto him less than nothing and vanity.' All being is essentially in him, and in comparison thereunto, all other things are as nothing. And there are no measures, there is no proportion between infinite being and nothing; nothing that should induce a regard from the one unto the other. Wherefore the infinite, essen-

tial greatness of the nature of God, with his infinite distance from the nature of all creatures thereby, causeth all his dealings with them to be in the way of condescension or humbling himself. So it is expressed, Isa. lvii. 15. 'Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' He is so the high and lofty one, and so inhabiteth eternity, or existeth in his own eternal being, that it is an act of mere grace in him, to take notice of things below; and therefore, he doth it in an especial manner of those whom the world doth most despise.

2. It ariseth from his infinite self-sufficiency unto all the acts and ends of his own eternal blessedness. What we have a regard unto, what we respect and desire, it is that it may add unto our satisfaction. So it is, so it must be, with every creature; no creature is self-sufficient unto its own blessedness. The human nature of Christ himself in heaven is not so; it lives in God, and God in it, in a full dependance on God, and in receiving blessed and glorious communications from him. No rational creature, angel or man, can do, think, act any thing, but it is all to add to their perfection and satisfaction, they are not self-sufficient. God alone wants nothing, stands in need of nothing, nothing can be added unto him, seeing he 'giveth unto all life, and breath, and all things;' Acts xvii. 25. The whole creation in all its excellency cannot contribute one mite unto the satisfaction or blessedness of God. He hath it all in infinite perfection from himself and in his own nature; our goodness extends not unto him; 'A man cannot profit God, as he may profit his neighbour. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? and if thy transgressions are multiplied, what dost thou unto him?' (God loseth nothing of his own self-sufficiency and blessedness therein, by all this) 'and if thou be righteous, what givest thou unto him, or what receiveth he at thy hand?' Job xxxv. 6—8. And from hence also it follows that all God's concernment in the creation, is by an act of condescension.

How glorious, then, is the condescension of the Son of God in his susception of the office of mediation! For if such be the perfection of the divine nature, and its dis-

tance so absolutely infinite from the whole creation, and if such be his self-sufficiency unto his own eternal blessedness, as that nothing can be taken from him, nothing added unto him, so that every regard in him unto any of the creatures, is an act of self-humiliation and condescension from the prerogative of his being and state; what heart can conceive, what tongue can express the glory of that condescension in the Son of God, whereby he took our nature upon him, took it to be his own, in order unto a discharge of the office of mediation on our behalf?

But that we may the better behold the glory of Christ herein, we may briefly consider the especial nature of this condescension, and wherein it doth consist.

But whereas not only the denial, but misapprehensions hereof, have pestered the church of God in all ages, we must in the first place reject them, and then declare the truth.

1. This condescension of the Son of God did not consist in a laying aside or parting with, or separation from, the divine nature, so as that he should cease to be God, by being man. The foundation of it lay in this, that 'he was in the form of God, and counted it not robbery to be equal with God;' Phil. ii. 6. That is, being really and essentially God in his divine nature, he professed himself therein to be equal with God or the person of the Father. He was in the form of God, that is, he was God, participant of the divine nature, for God hath no form but that of his essence and being; and hence he was equal with God, in authority, dignity, and power. Because he was in the form of God, he must be equal with God; for there is order in the divine persons, but no inequality in the divine Being. So the Jews understood him, that when he said, 'God was his Father, he made himself equal with God.' For in his so saying, he ascribed unto himself equal power with the Father, as unto all divine operations; 'My father,' saith he, 'worketh hitherto, and I work;' John v. 17, 18. And they by whom his divine nature is denied, do cast this condescension of Christ quite out of our religion, as that which hath no reality or substance in it. But we shall speak of them afterward.

Being in this state, it is said that he 'took on him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man;' ver. 7. This is his condescension. It is not said, that he ceased to

be in the form of God; but continuing so to be, he 'took on him the form of a servant' in our nature: he became what he was not, but he ceased not to be what he was. So he testifieth of himself, John iii. 13. 'No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man which is in heaven.' Although he was then on earth as the Son of man, yet he ceased not to be God thereby; in his divine nature he was then also in heaven.

He who is God, can no more be not God, than he who is not God can be God; and our difference with the Socinians herein is, we believe that Christ being God, was made man for our sakes; they say, that being only a man, he was made a God for his own sake.

This, then, is the foundation of the glory of Christ in this condescension, the life and soul of all heavenly truth and mysteries; namely, that the Son of God becoming in time to be what he was not, the Son of man, ceased not thereby to be what he was, even the eternal Son of God. Wherefore,

2. Much less did this condescension consist in the conversion of the divine nature into the human, which was the imagination of some of the Arians of old; and we have yet (to my own knowledge) some that follow them in the same dotage. They say that the 'Word which was in the beginning,' by which all things were made, being in itself an effect of the divine will and power, was in the fulness of time turned into flesh; that is, the substance of it was so, as the water in the miracle wrought by our Saviour, was turned into wine; for by an act of the divine power of Christ it ceased to be water substantially, and was wine only; not water mixed with wine. So these men suppose a substantial change of the one nature into the other, of the divine nature into the human; like what the Papists imagine in their transubstantiation. So they say God was made man, his essence being turned into that of a man.

But this no way belongs unto the condescension of Christ. We may call it Ichabod, it hath no glory in it. It destroys both his natures, and leaves him a person in whom we are not concerned. For according unto this imagination, that divine nature wherein he was in the form of God, did in its own form cease to be, yea, was utterly destroyed, as

being substantially changed into the nature of man; as the water did cease to be, when it was turned into wine; and that human nature which was made thereof, hath no alliance or kindred unto us, or our nature, seeing it was not 'made of a woman,' but of the substance of the Word.

3. There was not in this condescension, the least change or alteration in the divine nature. Eutiches and those that followed him of old, conceived that the two natures of Christ, the divine and human, were mixed and compounded as it were into one. And this could not be without an alteration in the divine nature, for it would be made to be essentially what it was not; for one nature hath but one and the same essence.

But, as we said before, although the Lord Christ himself in his person was made to be what he was not before, in that our nature hereby was made to be his, yet his divine nature was not so. There is in it neither 'variableness nor shadow of turning.' It abode the same in him in all its essential properties, actings, and blessedness, as it was from eternity. It neither did, acted, nor suffered any thing, but what is proper unto the Divine Being. The Lord Christ did and suffered many things in life and death, in his own person, by his human person, wherein the divine neither did, nor suffered any thing at all; although in the doing of them, his person be denominated from that nature; so 'God purchased his church with his own blood;' Acts xx. 28.

4. It may then be said, What did the Lord Christ in this condescension with respect unto his divine nature? The apostle tells us, that he 'humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation;' Phil. ii. 7, 8. He veiled the glory of his divine nature in ours, and what he did therein, so as that there was no outward appearance or manifestation of it. The world hereon was so far from looking on him as the true God, that it believed him not to be a good man. Hence they could never bear the least intimation of his divine nature, supposing themselves secured from any such thing, because they looked on him with their eyes to be a man, as he was indeed, no less truly and really than any one of themselves. Wherefore, on that testimony given of himself, 'Before Abraham was, I am,' which asserts a pre-existence from eternity in another nature than what they saw, they

were filled with rage, and 'took up stones to cast at him;' John viii. 58. And they give a reason of their madness, John x. 33. namely, that 'he, being a man, should make himself to be God.' This was such a thing, they thought, as could never enter into the heart of a wise and sober man; namely, that being so, owning himself to be such, he should yet say of himself, that he was God. This is that which no reason can comprehend, which nothing in nature can parallel or illustrate, that one and the same person should be both God and man. And this is the principal plea of the Socinians at this day, who through the Mahometans succeed unto the Jews in an opposition unto the divine nature of Christ.

But all this difficulty is solved by the glory of Christ in this condescension; for although in himself, or his own divine person, he was 'over all God blessed for ever;' yet he humbled himself for the salvation of the church unto the eternal glory of God, to take our nature upon him, and to be made man: and those who cannot see a divine glory in his so doing, do neither know him, nor love him, nor believe in him, nor do any way belong unto him.

So is it with the men of these abominations. Because they cannot behold the glory hereof, they deny the foundation of our religion, namely, the divine person of Christ. Seeing he would be made man, he shall be esteemed by them no more than a man. So do they reject that glory of God, his infinite wisdom, goodness, and grace, wherein he is more concerned than in the whole creation. And they dig up the root of all evangelical truths, which are nothing but branches from it.

It is true and must be confessed, that herein it is that our Lord Jesus Christ is 'a stumbling-stone, and a rock of offence' unto the world. If we should confess him only as a prophet, a man sent by God, there would not be much contest about him, nor opposition unto him. The Mahometans do all acknowledge it, and the Jews would not long deny it; for their hatred against him was, and is, solely because he professed himself to be God, and as such was believed on in the world. And at this day partly through the insinuation of the Socinians, and partly from the efficacy of their own blindness and unbelief, multitudes are willing to

grant him to be a prophet sent of God, who do not, who will not, who cannot, believe the mystery of this condescension in the susception of our nature, nor see the glory of it. But take this away, and all our religion is taken away with it. Farewell Christianity as unto the mystery, the glory, the truth, the efficacy of it; let a refined heathenism be established in its room. But this is the rock on which the church is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

4. This condescension of Christ was not by a phantasm or an appearance only. One of the first heresies that pestered the church immediately after the days of the apostles, was this, that all that was done or suffered by Christ as a man, were not the acts, doings, or sufferings of one that was truly and really a man, but an outward representation of things, like the appearance of angels in the shape of men, eating and drinking under the Old Testament; and suitably hereunto some in our days have spoken; namely, that there was only an appearance of Christ in the man Jesus at Jerusalem, in whom he suffered no more than in other believers. But the ancient Christians told those men the truth; namely, that 'as they had feigned unto themselves an imaginary Christ, so they should have an imaginary salvation only.'

But the true nature of this divine condescension doth consist in these three things:

1. That the eternal person of the Son of God, or the divine nature in the person of the Son, did by an ineffable act of his divine power and love, assume our nature into an individual subsistence in or with himself; that is, to be his own, even as the divine nature is his. This is the infallible foundation of faith even to them who can comprehend very little of these divine mysteries. They can, and do believe, that the Son of God did take our nature to be his own; so as that whatever was done therein, was done by him, as it is with every other man. Every man hath human nature appropriated unto himself by an individual subsistence; whereby he becomes to be that man which he is, and not another; or that nature which is common unto all, becomes in him to be peculiarly his own, as if there were none partaker of it but himself. Adam in his first creation, when all human nature was in him alone, was no more that individual man

which he was, than every man is now the man that he is, by his individual subsistence. So the Lord Christ taking that nature which is common unto all, into a peculiar subsistence in his own person, it becometh his, and he the man Christ Jesus. This was the mind that was in him.

2. By reason of this assumption of our nature, with his doing and suffering therein, whereby he was found in fashion as a man, the glory of his divine person was veiled, and he made himself of no reputation. This also belongs unto his condescension, as the first general effect and fruit of it. But we have spoken of it before.

3. It is also to be observed, that in the assumption of our nature to be his own, he did not change it into a thing divine and spiritual; but preserved it entire in all its essential properties and actings. Hence it really did and suffered, was tried, tempted, and forsaken as the same nature in any other man might do and be. That nature, as it was peculiarly his, and therefore he, or his person therein, was exposed unto all the temporary evils which the same nature is subject unto in any other person.

This is a short general view of this incomprehensible condescension of the Son of God, as it is described by the apostle, Phil. ii. 5—8. And this is that wherein in an especial manner we are to behold the glory of Christ by faith whilst we are in this world.

But had we the tongue of men and angels, we were not able in any just measure to express the glory of this condescension. For it is the most ineffable effect of the divine wisdom of the Father, and of the love of the Son, the highest evidence of the care of God towards mankind. What can be equal unto it? What can be like it? It is the glory of Christian religion, and the animating soul of all evangelical truth. This carrieth the mystery of the wisdom of God, above the reason or understanding of men and angels, to be the object of faith and admiration only. A mystery it is that becomes the greatness of God with his infinite distance from the whole creation; which renders it unbecoming him that all his ways and works should be comprehensible by any of his creatures; Job xi. 4, 5. 9. Rom. xi. 34—36.

He who was eternally in the form of God, that is, was essentially so, God by nature, equally participant of the

same divine nature with God the Father; 'God over all blessed for ever;' who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth; he takes on him the nature of man, takes it to be his own; whereby he was no less truly a man in time, than he was truly God from eternity. And to increase the wonder of this mystery, because it was necessary unto the end he designed, he so humbled himself in this assumption of our nature, as to make himself of no reputation in this world; yea, unto that degree, that he said of himself, that he was a worm and no man, in comparison of them who were of any esteem.

We speak of these things in a poor, low, broken manner; we teach them as they are revealed in the Scripture; we labour by faith to adhere unto them as revealed: but when we come into a steady, direct view and consideration of the thing itself, our minds fail, our hearts tremble, and we can find no rest, but in a holy admiration of what we cannot comprehend. Here we are at a loss, and know that we shall be so whilst we are in this world: but all the ineffable fruits and benefits of this truth are communicated unto them that do believe.

It is with reference hereunto, that that great promise concerning him is given unto the church, Isa. viii. 14. 'He shall be for a sanctuary;' (namely, unto all that believe, as it is expounded, 1 Pet. ii. 8.) 'but for a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them that stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.'

He is herein a sanctuary, an assured refuge unto all that betake themselves unto him. What is it that any man in distress, who flies thereunto, may look for in a sanctuary? A supply of all his wants, a deliverance from all his fears, a defence against all his dangers, is proposed unto him therein. Such is the Lord Christ herein unto sin-distressed souls; he is a refuge unto us in all spiritual distresses and disconsolations, Heb. vi. 18. See the exposition of the place. Are we, or any of us, burdened with a sense of sin? Are we perplexed with temptations? Are we bowed down under the oppression of any spiritual adversary? Do we on any of these accounts 'walk in darkness and have no light?' One view of the glory of Christ herein is able to support us and relieve us.

Unto whom we betake ourselves for relief in any case, we have regard to nothing but their will and their power. If they have both, we are sure of relief. And what shall we fear in the will of Christ as unto this end? What will he not do for us? He who thus emptied and humbled himself, who so infinitely condescended from the prerogative of his glory in his being and self-sufficiency, in the susception of our nature for the discharge of the office of a mediator on our behalf; will he not relieve us in all our distresses? Will he not do all for us we stand in need of, that we may be eternally saved? Will he not be a sanctuary unto us?

Nor have we hereon any ground to fear his power; for by this infinite condescension to be a suffering man, he lost nothing of his power as God omnipotent; nothing of his infinite wisdom or glorious grace. He could still do, all that he could do as God from eternity. If there be any thing therefore in a coalescency of infinite power, with infinite condescension, to constitute a sanctuary for distressed sinners, it is all in Christ Jesus. And if we see him not glorious herein, it is because there is no light of faith in us.

This then is the rest wherewith we may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshment. Herein is he 'a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' Hereon he says, 'I have satiated the weary soul, and have refreshed every sorrowful soul.' Under this consideration it is, that in all evangelical promises and invitations for coming to him, he is proposed unto distressed sinners, as their only sanctuary.

Herein is he 'a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence unto the unbelieving and disobedient, who stumble at the word.' They cannot, they will not, see the glory of this condescension; they neither desire nor labour so to do; yea, they hate it and despise it. Christ in it is 'a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence' unto them. Wherefore they choose rather utterly to deny his divine person, than allow that he did thus abase himself for our sakes. Rather than they will own this glory, they will allow him no glory. A man they say he was, and no more, and this was his glory. This is that principle of darkness and unbelief, which works effectually at this day in the minds of many. They think

it an absurd thing, as the Jews did of old, that he being a man, should be God also; or, on the other hand, that the Son of God should thus condescend to take our nature on him. This they can see no glory in, no relief, no refuge, no refreshment unto their souls in any of their distresses: therefore do they deny his divine person. Here faith triumphs against them; it finds that to be a glorious sanctuary, which they cannot at all discern.

But it is not so much the declaration or vindication of this glory of Christ which I am at present engaged in, as an exhortation unto the practical contemplation of it in a way of believing. And I know that among many this is too much neglected; yea, of all the evils which I have seen in the days of my pilgrimage now drawing to their close, there is none so grievous as the public contempt of the principal mysteries of the gospel among them that are called Christians. Religion in the profession of some men is withered in its vital principles, weakened in its nerves and sinews, but thought to be put off with outward gaiety and bravery.

But my exhortation is unto diligence in the contemplation of this glory of Christ, and the exercise of our thoughts about it. Unless we are diligent herein, it is impossible we should be steady in the principal acts of faith, or ready unto the principal duties of obedience. The principal act of faith respects the divine person of Christ, as all Christians must acknowledge. This we can never secure (as hath been declared) if we see not his glory in this condescension: and whoever reduceth his notions unto experience, will find that herein his faith stands or falls. And the principal duty of our obedience is self-denial, with readiness for the cross. Hereunto the consideration of this condescension of Christ is the principal evangelical motive, and that whereinto our obedience in it is to be resolved, as the apostle declares, Phil. ii. 5—7. And no man doth deny himself in a due manner, who doth it not on the consideration of the self-denial of the Son of God. But a prevalent motive this is thereunto. For what are the things wherein we are to deny ourselves, or forego what we pretend to have a right unto? It is in our goods, our liberties, our relations, our lives. And what are they, any, or all of them, in themselves, or unto us, considering our condition, and the end for which

we were made? Perishing things, which, whether we will or no, within a few days death will give us an everlasting separation from. Things under the power of a fever or an asthma, &c. as unto our interest in them. But how incomparable with respect hereunto is that condescension of Christ, whereof we have given an account? If therefore we find an unwillingness in us, a tergiversation in our minds about these things when called unto them in a way of duty, one view by faith of the glory of Christ in this condescension, and what he parted from therein, when he 'made himself of no reputation,' will be an effectual cure of that sinful distemper.

Herein then, I say, we may by faith behold the glory of Christ, as we shall do it by sight hereafter. If we see no glory in it, if we discern not that which is matter of eternal admiration, we walk in darkness. It is the most ineffable effect of divine wisdom and grace. Where are our hearts and minds, if we can see no glory in it? I know in the contemplation of it, it will quickly overwhelm our reason, and bring our understanding into a loss: but unto this loss do I desire to be brought every day; for when faith can no more act itself in comprehension, when it finds the object it is fixed on, too great and glorious to be brought into our minds and capacities, it will issue (as we said before) in holy admiration, humble adoration, and joyful thanksgiving. In and by its actings in them, doth it fill the soul with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

CHAP. V.

The glory of Christ in his love.

In the susception and discharge of the mediatory office by the Son of God, the Scripture doth most eminently represent his love, as the sole impelling and leading cause thereof, Gal. ii. 20. 1 John iii. 16. Rev. i. 5.

Herein is he glorious, in a way and manner incomprehensible; for in the glory of divine love, the chief brightness of glory doth consist. There is nothing of dread or terror ac-

companying it, nothing but what is amiable and infinitely refreshing. Now that we may take a view of the glory of Christ herein by faith, the nature of it must be inquired into.

1. The eternal disposing cause of the whole work wherein the Lord Christ was engaged by the susception of this office, for the redemption and salvation of the church, is the love of the Father. Hereunto it is constantly ascribed in the Scripture. And this love of the Father acted itself in his eternal decrees, 'before the foundation of the world,' Eph. i. 4. and afterward in the sending of his Son to render it effectual; John iii. 16. Originally, it is his eternal election of a portion of mankind to be brought unto the enjoyment of himself, through the mystery of the blood of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit; 2 Thess. ii. 13. 16. Eph. i. 4—9. 1 Pet. i. 2.

This eternal act of the will of God the Father, doth not contain in it an actual approbation of, and complacency in, the state and condition of those that are elected; but only designeth that for them on the account whereof they shall be accepted and approved. And it is called his love on sundry accounts.

1. Because it is an act suited unto that glorious excellency of his nature, wherein he is love; for 'God is love;' 1 John iv. 8, 9. And the first egress of the divine properties must therefore be in an act of communicative love. And whereas this election being an eternal act of the will of God, can have no moving cause but what is in himself; if we could look into all the treasures of the divine excellencies, we should find none whereunto it could be so properly ascribed, as unto love. Wherefore,

2. It is styled love, because it was free and undeserved, as unto any thing on our part. For whatever good is done unto any altogether undeserved, if it be with a design of their profit and advantage, it is an act of love, and can have no other cause. So is it with us in respect of eternal election. There was nothing in us, nothing foreseen, as that which from ourselves would be in us, that should any way move the will of God unto this election: for whatever is good in the best of men is an effect of it; Eph. i. 4. Whereas

therefore it tends unto our eternal good, the spring of it must be love. And,

3. The fruits or effects of it are inconceivable acts of love. It is by multiplied acts of love, that it is made effectual; John iii. 16. Jer. xxxi. 5. Eph. i. 3—6. 1 John iv. 8, 9. 16.

This is the eternal spring which is derived unto the church, through the mediation of Christ. Wherefore, that which put all the design of this eternal love of the Father into execution, and wrought out the accomplishment of it, was the love of the Son, which we inquire after; and light may be given unto it in the ensuing observations.

1. The whole number or society of the elect, were creatures made in the image of God, and thereby in a state of love with him. All that they were, had, or hoped for, were effects of divine goodness and love. And the life of their souls was love unto God. And a blessed state it was, preparatory for the eternal life of love in heaven.

2. From this state they fell by sin, into a state of enmity with God; which is comprehensive of all miseries, temporal and eternal.

3. Notwithstanding this woful catastrophe of our first state, yet our nature on many accounts was recoverable unto the enjoyment of God, as I have at large elsewhere declared.

4. In this condition, the first act of love in Christ towards us, was in pity and compassion. A creature made in the image of God, and fallen into misery, yet capable of recovery, is the proper object of divine compassion. That which is so celebrated in the Scripture, as the bowels, the pity, the compassion of God, is the acting of divine love towards us, on the consideration of our distress and misery. But all compassion ceaseth towards them whose condition is irrecoverable. Wherefore, the Lord Christ pitied not the angels that fell, because their nature was not to be relieved. Of this compassion in Christ, see Heb. ii. 14—16. Isa. lxiii. 9.

5. As then we lay under the eye of Christ in our misery, we were the objects of his pity and compassion; but as he looketh on us as recoverable out of that state, his love worketh in and by delight. It was an inconceivable delight

unto him to take a prospect of the deliverance of mankind unto the glory of God, which is also an act of love.' See this divinely expressed, Prov. viii. 30, 31. as that place hath been elsewhere explained.

6. If it be inquired, whence this compassion and delight in him should arise, what should be the cause of them; that he who was eternally blessed in his own self-sufficiency should so deeply concern himself in our lost forlorn condition? I say it did so, merely from the infinite love and goodness of his own nature, without the least procuring inducement from us, or any thing in us; 1 Pet. iii. 16.

7. In this his readiness, willingness, and delight, springing from love and compassion, the counsel of God concerning the way of our recovery, is as it were proposed unto him. Now this was a way of great difficulties and perplexities unto himself; that is, unto his person as it was to be constituted. Unto the divine nature nothing is grievous, nothing is difficult; but he was to have another nature, wherein he was to undergo the difficulties of this way and work. It was required of him, that he should pity us until he had none left to pity himself when he stood in need of it; that he should pursue his delight to save us, until his own soul was heavy and sorrowful unto death; that he should relieve us in our sufferings, by suffering the same things that we should have done. But he was not in the least hereby deterred from undertaking this work of love and mercy for us: yea his love rose on this proposal, like the waters of a mighty stream against opposition. For hereon he says, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;' it is my delight to do it; Heb. x. 5—7. Isa. l. 4—7.

8. Being thus inclined, disposed, and ready in the eternal love of his divine person, to undertake the office of mediation, and the work of our redemption, a body was prepared for him. In this body, or human nature made his own, he was to make this love effectual in all its inclinations and actings. It was provided for him unto this end, and filled with all grace in a way unmeasurable, especially with fervent love unto mankind. And hereby it became a meet instrument to actuate his eternal love in all the fruits of it.

9. It is hence evident, that this glorious love of Christ

doth not consist alone in the eternal actings of his divine person, or the divine nature in his person. Such indeed is the love of the Father, namely, his eternal purpose for the communication of grace and glory, with his acquiescency therein; but there is more in the love of Christ. For when he exercised this love, he was man also, and not God only. And in none of those eternal acts of love could the human nature of Christ have any interest or concern; yet is the love of the man Christ Jesus, celebrated in the Scripture.

10. Wherefore this love of Christ which we inquire after, is the love of his person; that is, which he in his own person acts in and by his distinct natures according unto their distinct essensial properties. And the acts of love in these distinct natures, are infinitely distinct and different; yet are they all acts of one and the same person. So then, whether that act of love in Christ which we would at any time consider, be an eternal act of the divine nature in the person of the Son of God; or whether it be an act of the human performed in time by the gracious faculties and powers of that nature, it is still the love of one and the selfsame person, Christ Jesus.

It was an act of inexpressible love in him that he assumed our nature; Heb. ii. 14. 17. But it was an act in and of his divine nature only; for it was antecedent unto the existence of his human nature, which could not therefore concur therein. His laying down his life for us, was an act of inconceivable love, 1 John viii. 6. Yet was it only an act of the human nature wherein he offered himself and died. But both the one and the other were acts of his divine person; whence it is said that God laid down his life for us, and purchased the church with his own blood.

This is that love of Christ wherein he is glorious, and wherein we are by faith to behold his glory. A great part of the blessedness of the saints in heaven, and their triumph therein, consists in their beholding of this glory of Christ, in their thankful contemplation of the fruits of it. See Rev. v. 9, 10, &c.

The illustrious brightness wherewith this glory shines in heaven, the all-satisfying sweetness which the view of it gives unto the souls of the saints there possessed of glory, are not by us conceivable, nor to be expressed. Here this

love passeth knowledge, there we shall comprehend the dimensions of it. Yet even here, if we are not slothful and carnal, we may have a refreshing prospect of it; and where comprehension fails, let admiration take place.

My present business is to exhort others unto the contemplation of it, though it be but a little, a very little, a small portion of it, that I can conceive; and less than that very little, that I can express. Yet may it be my duty to excite not only myself, but others also, unto due inquiries after it; unto which end I offer the things ensuing.

1. Labour that your minds may continually be fitted and prepared for such heavenly contemplations. If they are carnal and sensual, or filled with earthly things, a due sense of this love of Christ and its glory, will not abide in them. Virtue and vice in their highest degrees are not more diametrically opposite and inconsistent in the same mind, than are an habitual course of sensual worldly thoughts, and a due contemplation of the glory of the love of Christ; yea, an earnestness of spirit, pregnant with a multitude of thoughts about the lawful occasions of life, is obstructive of all due communion with the Lord Jesus Christ herein.

Few there are whose minds are prepared in a due manner for this duty. The actions and communications of the most, evidence what is the inward frame of their souls. They rove up and down in their thoughts, which are continually led by their affections into the corners of the earth. It is in vain to call such persons unto contemplations of the glory of Christ in his love. A holy composure of mind by virtue of spiritual principles, an inclination to seek after refreshment in heavenly things, and to bathe the soul in the fountain of them, with constant apprehensions of the excellency of this divine glory, are required hereunto.

2. Be not satisfied with general notions concerning the love of Christ, which represent no glory unto the mind, wherewith many deceive themselves. All who believe his divine person, profess a valuation of his love, and think them not Christians who are otherwise minded; but they have only general notions, and not any distinct conceptions of it, and really know not what it is. To deliver us from this snare, peculiar meditations on its principal concerns are required of us. As,

1. Whose love it is; namely, of the divine person of the Son of God. He is expressly called God, with respect unto the exercise of this love, that we may always consider whose it is, 1 John iii. 16. 'Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.'

2. By what ways and means this wonderful love of the Son of God doth act itself; namely, in the divine nature, by eternal acts of wisdom, goodness, and grace proper thereunto; and in the human, by temporary acts of pity or compassion, with all the fruits of them in doing and suffering for us. See Eph. iii. 19. Heb. ii. 14, 15. Rev. i. 5.

3. What is the freedom of it as unto any defect on our part; 1 John iv. 10. It was hatred, not love, that we in ourselves deserved, which is a consideration suited to fill the soul with self-abasement, the best of frames in the contemplation of the glory of Christ.

4. What is the efficacy of it in its fruits and effects, with sundry other considerations of the like nature. By a distinct prospect and admiration of these things, the soul may walk in this paradise of God, and gather here and there a heavenly flower, conveying unto it a sweet savour of this love of Christ. See Cant. xi. 2—4.

Moreover, be not contented to have right notions of the love of Christ in your minds, unless you can attain a gracious taste of it in your hearts; no more than you would be to see a feast or banquet richly prepared and partake of nothing of it unto your refreshment. It is of that nature that we may have a spiritual sensation of it in our minds, whence it is compared by the spouse to apples and flagons of wine. We may taste that the Lord is gracious. And if we find not a relish of it in our hearts, we shall not long retain the notion of it in our minds. Christ is the meat, the bread, the food of our souls. Nothing is in him of a higher spiritual nourishment than his love, which we should always desire.

In this love is he glorious; for it is such as no creatures, angels, or men could have the least conceptions of, before its manifestation by its effects: and after its manifestation, it is in this world absolutely incomprehensible.

CHAP. VI.

The glory of Christ in the discharge of his mediatory office.

As the Lord Christ was glorious in the susception of his office, so was he also in its discharge. An unseen glory accompanied him in all that he did, in all that he suffered. Unseen it was unto the eyes of the world, but not in his who alone can judge of it. Had men seen it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Yet to some of them it was made manifest. Hence they testified that in the discharge of his office, they 'beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;' John i. 14. And that when others could see neither 'form nor comeliness in him that he should be desired;' Psal. liii. 2. And so it is at this day. I shall only make some few observations; first, on what he did in a way of obedience, and then on what he suffered in the discharge of his office so undertaken by him.

1. What he did, what obedience he yielded unto the law of God, in the discharge of his office (with respect whereunto he said, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is in my heart'), it was all on his own free choice or election, and was resolved thereinto alone. It is our duty to endeavour after freedom, willingness, and cheerfulness in all our obedience. Obedience hath its formal nature from our wills. So much as there is of our wills, in what we do towards God, so much there is of obedience, and no more. Howbeit we are antecedently unto all acts of our own wills, obliged unto all that is called obedience. From the very constitution of our natures, we are necessarily subject unto the law of God. All that is left unto us, is a voluntary compliance with unavoidable commands; with him it was not so. An act of his own will and choice preceded all obligation as unto obedience. He obeyed because he would, before because he ought. He said, 'Lo I come to do thy will, O God,' before he was obliged to do that will. By his own choice, and that in an act of infinite condescension and love, as we have shewed, he was 'made of a woman,' and thereby 'made under the law.' In his divine person he

was Lord of the law, above it, no more obnoxious unto its commands, than its curse. Neither was he afterward in himself on his own account unobnoxious unto its curse, merely because he was innocent, but also because he was every way above the law itself, and all its force.

This was the original glory of his obedience. This wisdom, the grace, the love, the condescension that was in this choice, animated every act, every duty of his obedience rendering it amiable in the sight of God, and useful unto us. So when he went unto John to be baptized, he who knew he had no need of it on his own account, would have declined the duty of administering that ordinance unto him; but he replied, 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;' Matt. iii. 15. This I have undertaken willingly of my own accord, without any need of it for myself, and therefore will discharge it. For him who was Lord of all universally, thus to submit himself to universal obedience, carrieth along with it an evidence of glorious grace.

2. This obedience as unto the use and end of it, was not for himself, but for us. We were obliged unto it and could not perform it; he was not obliged unto it any otherwise but by a free act of his own will, and did perform it. God gave him this honour, that he should obey for the whole church, that by 'his obedience we should be made righteous;' Rom. v. 19. Herein I say did God give him honour and glory, that his obedience should stand in the stead of the perfect obedience of the church as unto justification.

3. His obedience being absolutely universal, and absolutely perfect, was the great representative of the holiness of God in the law. It was represented glorious when the ten words were written by the finger of God in tables of stone; it appears yet more eminently in the spiritual transcription of it in the hearts of believers: but absolutely and perfectly it is exemplified only in the holiness and obedience of Christ, which answered it unto the utmost. And this is no small part of his glory in obedience that the holiness of God in the law was therein, and therein alone in that one instance, as unto human nature, fully represented.

4. He wrought out this obedience against all difficulties and oppositions. For although he was absolutely free from

that disorder which in us hath invaded our whole natures, which internally renders all obedience difficult unto us, and perfect obedience impossible; yet as unto opposition from without in temptations, sufferings, reproaches, contradictions, he met with more than we all. Hence is that glorious word, 'Although he were a son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered;' Heb. v. 8. See our exposition of that place. But,

5. The glory of this obedience ariseth principally from the consideration of the person, who thus yielded it unto God. This was no other but the Son of God made man; God and man in one person. He who was in heaven, above all, Lord of all, at the same time lived in the world in a condition of no reputation, and a course of the strictest obedience unto the whole law of God. He unto whom prayer was made, prayed himself night and day. He whom all the angels of heaven and all creatures worshipped, was continually conversant in all the duties of the worship of God. He who was over the house, diligently observed the meanest office of the house. He that made all men, in whose hand they are all as clay in the hand of the potter, observed amongst them the strictest rules of justice in giving unto every one his due, and of charity, in giving good things that were not so due. This is that which renders the obedience of Christ in the discharge of his office, both mysterious and glorious.

2. Again, the glory of Christ is proposed unto us in what he suffered in the discharge of the office which he had undertaken. There belonged indeed unto his office, victory, success, and triumph with great glory, Isa. lxiii. 1—5. but there were sufferings also required of him antecedently thereunto. 'Ought not Christ to suffer and to enter into his glory?'

But such were these sufferings of Christ, as that in our thoughts about them, our minds quickly recoil in a sense of their insufficiency to conceive aright of them. Never any one launched into this ocean with his meditations, but he quickly found himself unable to fathom the depths of it; nor shall I here undertake an inquiry into them. I shall only point at this spring of glory, and leave it under a veil.

We might here look on him as under the weight of the

wrath of God, and the curse of the law; taking on himself, and on his whole soul, the utmost of evil that God had ever threatened to sin or sinners; we might look on him in his agony and bloody sweat, in his strong cries and supplications, when he was sorrowful unto the death, and began to be amazed, in apprehensions of the things that were coming on him; of that dreadful trial which he was entering into; we might look upon him, conflicting with all the powers of darkness, the rage and madness of men, suffering in his soul, his body, his name, his reputation, his goods, his life; some of these sufferings being immediate from God above, others from devils and wicked men, acting according to the determinate counsel of God: we might look on him praying, weeping, crying out, bleeding, dying, in all things making his soul an offering for sin; so was he 'taken from prison, and judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off from the land of the living: for the transgression' (saith God) 'of my people was he smitten;' Isa. liii. 8. But these things I shall not insist on in particular, but leave them under such a veil as may give us a prospect into them, so far as to fill our souls with holy admiration.

Lord! What is man that thou art thus mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? Who hath known thy mind, or who hath been thy counsellor? O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! What shall we say unto these things? that God spared not his only Son, but gave him up unto death, and all the evils included therein, for such poor, lost sinners as we were; that for our sakes the eternal Son of God should submit himself unto all the evils that our natures are obnoxious unto, and that our sins had deserved, that we might be delivered!

How glorious is the Lord Christ on this account in the eyes of believers! When Adam had sinned, and thereby eternally, according unto the sanction of the law, ruined himself and all his posterity, he stood ashamed, afraid, trembling, as one ready to perish for ever under the displeasure of God. Death was that which he had deserved, and immediate death was that which he looked for. In this state the Lord Christ in the promise comes unto him, and

says, Poor creature! How woful is thy condition! How deformed is thy appearance! What is become of the beauty, of the glory of that image of God wherein thou wast created? How hast thou taken on thee the monstrous shape and image of Satan! and yet thy present misery, thy entrance into dust and darkness, is no way to be compared with what is to ensue. Eternal distress lies at the door. But yet look up once more, and behold me, that thou mayest have some glimpse of what is in the designs of infinite wisdom, love, and grace. Come forth from thy vain shelter, thy hiding-place. I will put myself into thy condition. I will undergo and bear that burden of guilt and punishment, which would sink thee eternally into the bottom of hell. I will pay that which I never took; and be made temporally a curse for thee, that thou mayest attain unto eternal blessedness. To the same purpose he speaks unto convinced sinners in the invitation he gives them to come unto him.

Thus is the Lord Christ set forth in the gospel, 'evidently crucified before our eyes;' Gal. iii. 1. namely, in the representation that is made of his glory, in the sufferings he underwent for the discharge of the office he had undertaken. Let us then behold him as poor, despised, persecuted, reproached, reviled, hanged on a tree; in all labouring under a sense of the wrath of God due unto our sins. Unto this end are they recorded in the gospel, read, preached, and represented unto us. But what can we see herein? what glory is in these things? Are not these the things which all the world of Jews and Gentiles stumbled and took offence at? Those wherein he was appointed to be a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence? Was it not esteemed a foolish thing to look for help and deliverance by the miseries of another? To look for life by his death? The apostle declares at large that such it was esteemed, 1 Cor. i. So was it in the wisdom of the world. But even on the account of these things is he honourable, glorious, and precious in the sight of them that do believe; 1 Pet. ii. 6, 7. For even herein he was the 'wisdom of God and the power of God;' 1 Cor. i. 24. And the apostle declares at large the grounds and reasons of the different thoughts and apprehensions of men concerning the cross and sufferings of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 3—6.

CHAP. VII.

The glory of Christ in his exaltation, after the accomplishment of the work of mediation in this world.

We may in the next place behold the glory of Christ with respect unto his office in the actings of God towards him, which ensued on his discharge of it in this world, in his own exaltation.

These are the two heads, whereunto all the prophecies and predictions concerning Jesus Christ under the Old Testament are referred, namely, his sufferings, and the glory that ensued thereon; 1 Pet. i. 11. 'All the prophets testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.' So when he himself opened the Scriptures unto his disciples, he gave them this as the sum of the doctrine contained in them; 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?' Luke xxiv. 26. The same is frequently expressed elsewhere; Rom. xiv. 9. Phil. ii. 5—8.

So much as we know of Christ, his sufferings, and his glory; so much do we understand of the Scripture, and no more.

These are the two heads of the mediation of Christ and his kingdom; and this is their order which they communicate unto the church; first sufferings, and then glory. 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with him;' 2 Tim. ii. 12. They do but deceive themselves who design any other method of these things. Some would reign here in this world; and we may say with the apostle, 'would you did reign, that we might reign with you.' But the members of the mystical body must be conformed unto the head. In him, sufferings went before glory; and so they must in them. The order in the kingdom of Satan and the world, is contrary hereunto. First the good things of this life, and then eternal misery, is the method of that kingdom; Luke xvi. 25.

These are the two springs of the salvation of the church; the two anointed ones, that stand before the Lord of the whole earth; from which all the golden oil, whereby the

church is dedicated unto God and sanctified, doth flow. This glory of Christ in his exaltation which followed on his sufferings, is that which we now inquire into. And we shall state our apprehensions of it in the ensuing observations.

1. This is peculiarly that glory which the Lord Christ prays that his disciples may be where he is, to behold it. It is not solely so, as it is considered absolutely; but it is that, wherein all the other parts of his glory are made manifest. It is the evidence, the pledge, the means of the manifestation of them all. As unto all the instances of his glory before insisted on, there was a veil drawn over them whilst he was in this world. Hence the most saw nothing of it, and the best saw it but obscurely. But in this glory that veil is taken off, whereby the whole glory of his person in itself, and in the work of mediation is most illustriously manifested. When we shall immediately behold this glory, we shall see him as he is. This is that glory whereof the Father made grant unto him before the foundation of the world, and wherewith he was actually invested upon his ascension.

2. By this glory of Christ, I do not understand the essential glory of his divine nature; or his being absolutely in his own person 'over all, God blessed for ever;' but the manifestation of this glory in particular, after it had been veiled in this world under the 'form of a servant,' belongs hereunto. The divine glory of Christ in his person belongs not unto his exaltation; but the manifestation of it doth so. It was not given him by free donation; but the declaration of it unto the church of angels and men after his humiliation was so. He left it not whilst he was in this world; but the direct evidence and declaration of it he laid aside, until he was 'declared to be the Son of God with power,' by the resurrection from the dead.

When the sun is under a total eclipse, he loseth nothing of his native beauty, light, and glory. He is still the same that he was from the beginning; a 'great light to rule the day.' To us he appears as a dark, useless meteor; but when he comes by his course to free himself from the lunar interposition unto his proper aspect towards us, he manifests again his native light and glory. So was it with the

divine nature of Christ, as we have before declared. He veiled the glory of it by the interposition of the flesh, or the assumption of our nature to be his own, with this addition, that therein he took on him the 'form of a servant,' of a person of mean and low degree. But this temporary eclipse being past and over, it now shines forth in its infinite lustre and beauty, which belongs unto the present exaltation of his person. And when those who beheld him here as a poor, sorrowful, persecuted man, dying on the cross, came to see him in all the infinite uncreated glories of the divine nature, manifesting themselves in his person, it could not but fill their souls with transcendent joy and admiration. And this is one reason of his prayer for them whilst he was on the earth, that they might be where he is to behold his glory. For he knew what ineffable satisfaction it would be unto them for evermore.

3. I do not understand absolutely the glorification of the human nature of Christ; that very soul and body wherein he lived and died, suffered and rose again, though that also be included herein. This also were a subject meet for our contemplation, especially as it is the exemplar of that glory which he will bring all those unto, who believe in him. But because at present we look somewhat farther, I shall observe only one or two things concerning it.

1. That very nature itself which he took on him in this world, is exalted into glory. Some, under a pretence of great subtilty and accuracy, do deny that he hath either flesh or blood in heaven; that is, as to the substance of them: however, you may suppose that they are changed, purified, glorified. The great foundation of the church, and all gospel faith is, that he was made flesh, that he did partake of flesh and blood, even as did the children. That he hath forsaken that flesh and blood which he was made in the womb of the blessed Virgin; wherein he lived and died, which he offered unto God in sacrifice, and wherein he rose from the dead, is a Socinian fiction. What is the true nature of the glorification of the humanity of Christ, neither those who thus surmise, nor we can perfectly comprehend. It doth not yet appear what we ourselves shall be, much less is it evident unto us what he is, whom we shall be like. But that he is still in the same human nature, wherein he

was on the earth, that he hath the same rational soul and the same body, is a fundamental article of the Christian faith.

2. This nature of the man Christ Jesus, is filled with all the divine graces and perfections whereof a limited, created nature is capable. It is not deified, it is not made a God; it doth not in heaven coalesce into one nature with the divine by a composition of them; it hath not any essential property of the Deity communicated unto it, so as subjectively to reside in it; it is not made omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent; but it is exalted in a fulness of all divine perfection ineffably above the glory of angels and men. It is incomprehensibly nearer God than they all; hath communications from God, in glorious light, love, and power, ineffably above them all. But it is still a creature.

For the substance of this glory of the human nature of Christ, believers shall be made partakers of it; for when we see him as he is, we shall be like him: but as unto the degrees and measures of it, his glory is above all that we can be made partakers of. 'There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon and stars; and one star differeth from another in glory,' as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 45. And if there be a difference in glory among the stars themselves as to some degrees of the same glory; how much more is there between the glory of the sun and that of any star whatever? Such is the difference that is, and will be unto eternity, between the human nature of Christ, and what glorified believers do attain unto. But yet this is not that properly wherein the glory of Christ in his exaltation, after his humiliation and death, doth consist. The things that belong unto it may be reduced unto the ensuing heads.

1. It consisteth in the exaltation of the human nature, as subsisting in the divine person above the whole creation of God in power, dignity, authority, and rule, with all things that the wisdom of God hath appointed to render the glory of it illustrious. I have so largely insisted on the explication and confirmation of this part of the present glory of Christ, in the exposition of Heb. i. 2, 3. that I have nothing more to add thereunto.

2. It doth so in the evidence given of the infinite love of God the Father unto him, and his delight in him, with the

eternal approbation of his discharge of the office committed unto him. Hence he is said 'to sit at the right hand of God,' or at 'the right hand of the majesty on high.' That the glory and dignity of Christ in his exaltation is singular, the highest that can be given to a creature incomprehensible; that he is with respect unto the discharge of his office, under the eternal approbation of God; that, as so gloriously exalted, he is proclaimed unto the whole creation, are all contained in this expression.

3. Hereunto is added the full manifestation of his own divine wisdom, love, and grace, in the work of mediation and redemption of the church. This glory is absolutely singular and peculiar unto him. Neither angels or men have the least interest in it. Here we see it darkly as in a glass: above, it shines forth in its brightness to the eternal joy of them who behold him.

This is that glory which our Lord Jesus Christ in an especial manner prayed that his disciples might behold. This is that whereof we ought to endeavour a prospect by faith. By faith, I say, and not by imagination. Vain and foolish men having general notions of this glory of Christ, knowing nothing of the real nature of it, have endeavoured to represent it in pictures and images with all that lustre and beauty which the art of painting, with the ornaments of gold and jewels, can give unto them. This is that representation of the present glory of Christ, which being made and proposed unto the imagination and carnal affections of superstitious persons, carrieth such a shew of devotion and veneration in the Papal church. But they err, not knowing the Scripture, nor the eternal glory of the Son of God.

This is the sole foundation of all our meditations herein. The glory that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the real actual possession of in heaven, can be no otherwise seen or apprehended in this world, but in the light of faith, fixing itself on divine revelation. To behold this glory of Christ is not an act of fancy or imagination. It doth not consist in framing unto ourselves the shape of a glorious person in heaven. But the steady exercise of faith on the revelation and description made of this glory of Christ in the Scripture, is the ground, rule, and measure, of all divine meditations thereon.

Hereon our duty it is, to call ourselves to an account, as unto our endeavour after a gracious view of this glory of Christ. When did we steadfastly behold it? When had we such a view of it as wherein our souls have been satisfied and refreshed? It is declared and represented unto us as one of the chief props of our faith, as a help of our joy, as an object of our hope, as a ground of our consolation, as our greatest encouragement unto obedience and suffering. Are our minds every day conversant with thoughts hereof? Or do we think ourselves not much concerned herein? Do we look upon it, as that which is without us and above us, as that which we shall have time enough to consider when we come to heaven? So is it with many. They care neither where Christ is, nor what he is, so that one way or other they may be saved by him. They hope, as they pretend, that they shall see him and his glory in heaven, and that they suppose to be time enough; but in vain do they pretend a desire thereof; in vain are their expectations of any such thing. They who endeavour not to behold the glory of Christ in this world, as hath been often said, shall never behold him in glory hereafter unto their satisfaction; nor do they desire so to do, only they suppose it a part of that relief which they would have when they are gone out of this world. For what should beget such a desire in them? Nothing can do it, but some view of it here by faith, which they despise, or totally neglect. Every pretence of a desire of heaven, and of the presence of Christ therein, that doth not arise from, that is not resolved into, that prospect which we have of the glory of Christ in this world by faith, is mere fancy and imagination.

Our constant exercise in meditation on this glory of Christ will fill us with joy on his account, which is an effectual motive unto the duty itself. We are for the most part selfish, and look no farther than our own concernments. So we may be pardoned and saved by him, we care not much how it is with himself, but only presume it is well enough. We find not any concernment of our own therein. But this frame is directly opposite unto the genius of divine faith and love. For their principal actings consist in preferring Christ above ourselves; and our concerns in him, above all our own. Let this then stir us up unto the contemplation

of this glory. Who is it that is thus exalted over all? Who is thus encompassed with glory, majesty, and power? Who is it that sits down at the right hand of the majesty on high, all his enemies being made his footstool? Is it not he, who in this world was poor, despised, persecuted, and slain, all for our sakes? Is it not the same Jesus who loved us, and gave himself for us, and washed us in his own blood? So the apostle told the Jews, that the same 'Jesus whom they slew and hanged on a tree, God had exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and the forgiveness of sins;' Acts v. 30, 31. If we have any valuation of his love, if we have any concernment in what he hath done and suffered for the church, we cannot but rejoice in his present state and glory.

Let the world rage whilst it pleaseth; let it set itself with all its power and craft against every thing of Christ that is in it, which, whatever is by some otherwise pretended, proceeds from a hatred unto his person; let men make themselves drunk with the blood of his saints, we have this to oppose unto all their attempts, unto our supportment, namely, what he says of himself; 'Fear not; I am the first and the last: he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death;' Rev. i. 17, 18.

Blessed Jesus! We can add nothing to thee, nothing to thy glory; but it is a joy of heart unto us that thou art what thou art; that thou art so gloriously exalted at the right hand of God; and do long more fully and clearly to behold that glory according to thy prayer and promise.

CHAP. VIII.

Representations of the glory of Christ under the Old Testament.

It is said of our Lord Jesus Christ, that 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he declared unto his disciples in all the Scripture the things concerning himself;' Luke xxiv. 27. It is therefore manifest that Moses and the prophets, and all

the Scriptures, do give testimony unto him, and his glory. This is the line of life and light, which runs through the whole Old Testament; without the conduct whereof we can understand nothing aright therein: and the neglect hereof, is that which makes many as blind in reading the books of it, as are the Jews, the veil being upon their minds. It is faith alone, discovering the glory of Christ, that can remove that veil of darkness which covers the minds of men in reading the Old Testament, as the apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii. 14—16. I shall therefore consider briefly some of those ways and means whereby the glory of Christ was represented unto believers under the Old Testament.

1. It was so in the institution of the beautiful worship of the law, with all the means of it. Herein have they the advantage above all the splendid ceremonies that men can invent, in the outward worship of God; they were designed and framed in divine wisdom to represent the glory of Christ in his person and his office. This nothing of human invention can do, or once pretend unto. Men cannot create mysteries, nor can give unto any thing natural in itself, a mystical signification. But so it was in the old divine institutions. What were the tabernacle and temple? What was the holy place with the utensils of it? What was the oracle, the ark, the cherubims, the mercy-seat placed therein? What was the high-priest in all his vestments and administrations? What were the sacrifices, and annual sprinkling of blood in the most holy place? What was the most whole system of their religious worship? Were they any thing but representations of Christ in the glory of his person and his office? They were a shadow, and the body represented by that shadow, was Christ. If any would see how the Lord Christ was in particular foresignified and represented in them, he may peruse our exposition on the ninth chapter of the Epistle unto the Hebrews, where it is handled so at large, as that I shall not here again insist upon it. The sum is, 'Moses was faithful in all the house of God, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken afterward;' Heb. iii. 5. All that Moses did in the erection of the tabernacle, and the institution of all its services, was but to give an antecedent testimony by way of representation, unto the things of Christ that were afterward to be revealed. And that

also was the substance of the ministry of the prophets; 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. The dark apprehensions of the glory of Christ, which by these means they obtained, were the life of the church of old.

2. It was represented in the mystical account which is given us of his communion with his church in love and grace. As this is intimated in many places of Scripture, so there is one entire book designed unto its declaration. This is the divine Song of Solomon, who was a type of Christ, and a penman of the Holy Ghost therein. A gracious record it is of the divine communications of Christ in love and grace unto his church, with their returns of love unto him, and delight in him. And then may a man judge himself to have somewhat profited in the experience of the mystery of a blessed intercourse and communion with Christ, when the expressions of them in that holy dialogue, do give light and life unto his mind, and efficaciously communicate unto him an experience of their power. But because these things are little understood by many, the book itself is much neglected if not despised. Yea, to such impudence have some arrived, in foaming out their own shame, as that they have ridiculed the expressions of it; but we are foretold of such mockers in the last days, that should walk after their own ungodly lusts; they are not of our present consideration.

The former instance of the representations of the glory of Christ in their institutions of outward worship, with this record of the inward communion, they had with Christ in grace, faith, and love, gives us the substance of that view which they had of his glory. What holy strains of delight and admiration, what raptures of joy, what solemn and divine complacency, what ardency of affection, and diligence in attendance unto the means of enjoying communion with him, this discovery of the glory of Christ wrought in the souls of them that did believe, is emphatically expressed in that discourse. A few days, a few hours spent in the frame characterized in it, is a blessedness excelling all the treasures of the earth; and if we, whose revelations of the same glory do far exceed theirs, should be found to come short of them in ardency of affection unto Christ, and continual holy admiration of his excellencies, we shall one day be judged unworthy to have received them.

3. It was so represented and made known under the Old Testament in his personal appearances on various occasions unto several eminent persons, leaders of the church in their generations. This he did as a 'præludium' to his incarnation. He was as yet God only; but appeared in the assumed shape of a man, to signify what he would be. He did not create a human nature, and unite it unto himself for such a season; only by his divine power he acted the shape of a man composed of what etherial substance he pleased, immediately to be dissolved. So he appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, to Joshua, and others, as I have at large elsewhere proved and confirmed. And hereon also, because he was the divine person who dwelt in, and dwelt with the church, under the Old Testament from first to last, in so doing he constantly assumes unto himself human affections, to intimate that a season would come when he would immediately act in that nature. And, indeed, after the fall there is nothing spoken of God in the Old Testament, nothing of his institutions, nothing of the way and manner of dealing with the church, but what hath respect unto the future incarnation of Christ. And it had been absurd to bring in God under perpetual anthropopathies, as grieving, repenting, being angry, well pleased, and the like, were it not but that the divine person intended, was to take on him the nature wherein such affections do dwell.

4. It was represented in prophetical visions. So the apostle affirms that the vision which Isaiah had of him, was when he saw his glory; John xii. 41. And it was a blessed representation thereof. For his divine person being exalted on a throne of glory, 'his train filled the temple.' The whole train of his glorious grace filled the temple of his body. This is the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man. The temple which was destroyed, and which he raised again in three days, wherein dwelt the fulness of the Godhead; Col. i. 9. This glory was now presented unto the view of Isaiah, chap. vi. 1—3. which filled him with dread and astonishment. But from thence he was relieved, by an act of the ministry of that glorious one, taking away his iniquity by a coal from the altar, which typified the purifying efficacy of his sacrifice. This was food for the souls of believers: in these and on the like occasions, did the whole

church lift up their voice in that holy cry, 'Make haste our beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, on the mountain of spices.'

Of the same nature was his glorious appearance on mount Sinai at the giving of the law, Exod. xix. For the description thereof by the psalmist, Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. is applied by the apostle unto the ascension of Christ after his resurrection; Eph. iv. 8—11. Only as it was then full of outward terror, because of the giving of the fiery law, it was referred unto by the psalmist, as full of mercy, with respect unto his accomplishment of the same law. His giving of it was as death unto them concerned, because of its holiness, and the severity of the curse wherewith it was attended; his fulfilling of it was life, by the pardon and righteousness which issued from thence.

5. The doctrine of his incarnation, whereby he became the subject of all that glory which we inquire after, was revealed, although not so clearly as by the gospel, after the actual accomplishment of the thing itself. In how many places this is done in the Old Testament, I have elsewhere declared; at least I have explained and vindicated many of them (for no man can presume to know them all), Vindic. Evangel. One instance, therefore, shall here suffice; and this is that of the same prophet Isaiah, chap. ix. 6, 7. 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth and for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.' This one testimony is sufficient to confound all Jews, Socinians, and other enemies of the glory of Christ. I do acknowledge, that notwithstanding this declaration of the glory of Christ in his future incarnation and rule, there remained much darkness in the minds of them unto whom it was then made. For although they might and did acquiesce in the truth of the revelation, yet they could frame to themselves no notions of the way or manner of its accomplishment. But now, when every word of it is explained, declared, and its mystical

sense visibly laid open unto us in the gospel, and by the accomplishment exactly answering every expression in it, it is judicial blindness not to receive it. Nothing but the satanical pride of the hearts of men, which will admit of no effects of infinite wisdom, but what they suppose they can comprehend, can shut their eyes against the light of this truth.

6. Promises, prophecies, predictions, concerning his person, his coming, his office, his kingdom, and his glory in them all, with the wisdom, grace, and love of God to the church in him, are the line of life, as was said, which runs through all the writings of the Old Testament, and takes up a great portion of them. Those were the things which he expounded unto his disciples out of Moses and all the prophets. Concerning these things he appealed to the Scriptures against all his adversaries; 'Search the Scriptures, for they are they that testify of me.' And if we find them not, if we discern them not therein, it is because a veil of blindness is over our minds. Nor can we read, study, or meditate on the writings of the Old Testament unto any advantage, unless we design to find out and behold the glory of Christ declared and represented in them. For want hereof they are a sealed book to many unto this day.

7. It is usual in the Old Testament to set out the glory of Christ under metaphorical expressions; yea, it aboundeth therein. For such allusions are exceedingly suited to let in a sense into our minds of those things which we cannot distinctly comprehend. And there is an infinite condescension of divine wisdom in their way of instruction, representing unto us the power of things spiritual, in what we naturally discern. Instances of this kind in calling the Lord Christ by the names of those creatures, which unto our senses re-represent that excellency which is spiritually in him, are innumerable. So he is called the rose, for the sweet savour of his love, grace, and obedience; the lily, for his gracious beauty and amiableness; the pearl of price, for his worth, for to them that believe he is precious; the vine, for his fruitfulness; the lion, for his power; the lamb, for his meekness and fitness for sacrifice; with other things of the like kind almost innumerable.

These things have I mentioned, not with any design to search into the depth of this treasury of those divine truths

concerning the glory of Christ; but only to give a little light unto the words of the evangelist, that he 'opened unto his disciples out of Moses and all the prophets the things which concerned himself;' and to stir up our own souls unto a contemplation of them as contained therein.

CHAP. IX.

The glory of Christ in his intimate conjunction with the church.

WHAT concerns the glory of Christ in the mission of the Holy Ghost unto the church, with all the divine truths that are branched from it, I have at large declared in my discourse concerning the whole dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Here therefore it must have no place amongst those many other things which offer themselves unto our contemplation, as part of this glory, or intimately belonging thereunto. I shall insist briefly on three only, which cannot be reduced directly unto the former heads.

And the first of these is, That intimate conjunction that is between Christ and the church; whence it is just and equal in the sight of God, according unto the rules of his eternal righteousness, that what he did and suffered in the discharge of his office, should be esteemed, reckoned, and imputed unto us, as unto all the fruits and benefits of it, as if we had done and suffered the same things ourselves. For this conjunction of his with us, was an act of his own mind and will, wherein he is ineffably glorious.

The enemies of the glory of Christ and of his cross, do take this for granted, that there ought to be such a conjunction between the guilty person and him that suffers for him, as that in him the guilty person may be said in some sense to undergo the punishment himself. But then they affirm, on the other hand, that there was no such conjunction between Christ and sinners; none at all; but that he was a man, as they were men; and otherwise, that he was at the greatest distance from them all, as it is possible for one man to be from another; Socin. de Servat. lib. iii. cap. 3. The falseness of this latter assertion, and the gross ignorance of

the Scripture, under a pretence of subtilty in them that make it, will evidently appear in our ensuing discourse.

The apostle tells us, 1 Pet. ii. 24. that in 'his own self he bare our sins in his own body on the tree;' and chap. iii. 18. that 'he suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.' But this seems somewhat strange unto reason. Where is the justice, where is the equity, that the just should suffer for the unjust? Where is divine righteousness herein? For it was an act of God, 'the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;' Isa. liii. 6. The equity hereof, with the grounds of it, must be here a little inquired into.

First of all, it is certain, that all the elect, the whole church of God, fell in Adam, under the curse due to the transgression of the law. It is so also, that in this curse, death both temporal and eternal was contained. This curse none could undergo and be saved. Nor was it consistent with the righteousness, or holiness, or truth of God, that sin should go unpunished. Wherefore there was a necessity, upon a supposition of God's decree to save his church, of a translation of punishment; namely, from them who had deserved it, and could not bear it, unto one who had not deserved it, but could bear it.

A supposition of this translation of punishment by divine dispensation, is the foundation of Christian religion, yea, of all supernatural revelation contained in the Scripture. This was first intimated in the first promise; and afterward explained and confirmed in all the institutions of the Old Testament. For although in the sacrifices of the law, there was a revival of the greatest and most fundamental principle of the law of nature, namely, that God is to be worshipped with our best; yet the principal end and use of them, was to represent this translation of punishment from the offender unto another, who was to be a sacrifice in his stead.

The reasons of the equity hereof, and the unspeakable glory of Christ herein, is what we now inquire into. And I shall reduce what ought to be spoken hereunto, to the ensuing heads.

1. It is not contrary unto the nature of divine justice;

it doth not interfere with the principles of natural light in man, that in sundry cases some persons should suffer punishment for the sins and offences of others.

I shall at present give this assertion no other confirmation, but only that God hath often done so, who will, who can do no iniquity.

So he affirms that he will do, Exod. xx. 5. 'Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.' It is no exception of weight, that they also are sinners, continuing in their father's sins; for the worst of sinners must not be dealt unjustly withal: but they must be so if they are punished for their father's sins, and it be absolutely unlawful that any one should be punished for the sin of another.

So the church affirms; 'Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities;' Lam. v. 11. And so it was; for in the Babylonish captivity God punished the sins of their forefathers, especially those committed in the days of Manasses; 2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27. As afterward in the final destruction of that church and nation, God punished in them the guilt of all bloody persecutions from the beginning of the world; Luke xi. 50, 51.

So Canaan was cursed for the sin of his father; Gen. ix. 25. Saul's seven sons were put to death for their father's bloody cruelty; 2 Sam. xxi. 8. 14. For the sin of David, seventy thousand of the people were destroyed by an angel, concerning whom he said, 'It is I that have sinned and done evil, these sheep what have they done?' 2 Sam. xxiv. 15. 17. See also 1 Kings xxi. 29. So was it with all the children or infants that perished in the flood, or in the conflagration of Sodom and Gomorrah. And other instances of the like nature may be assigned.

It is therefore evident, that there is no inconsistency with the nature of divine justice, nor the rules of reason among men, that in sundry cases the sins of some may be punished on others.

2. It is to be observed that this administration of justice is not promiscuous, that any whatever may be punished for the sins of any others. There is always a special cause and reason of it; and this is a peculiar conjunction between them

who sin, and those who are punished for their sins. And two things belong unto this conjunction. 1. Especial relation. 2. Especial mutual interest.

1. There is an especial relation required unto this translation of punishment. Such as that between parents and children, as in most of the instances before given; or between a king and subjects, as in the case of David. Hereby the persons sinning, and those suffering, are constituted one body, wherein if one member offend, another may justly suffer: the back may answer for what the hand takes away.

2. It consists in mutual interest. Those whose sins are punished in others, have such an interest in them, as that their being so, is a punishment unto themselves. Therefore are such sinners threatened with the punishment and evils that shall befall their posterity or children for their sakes, which is highly penal unto themselves; Numb. xiv. 33. 'Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms.' The punishment due to their sins is in part transferred unto their children, and therein did the sting of their own punishment also consist.

3. There is a greater, a more intimate conjunction, a nearer relation, a higher mutual interest between Christ and the church, than ever was or can be between any other persons or relations in the world, whereon it became just and equal in the sight of God, that he should suffer for us, and that what he did and suffered should be imputed unto us, which is farther to be cleared.

There neither is nor can be, any more than a threefold conjunction between divers distinct persons. The first is natural, the second is moral, whereunto I refer that which is spiritual or mystical; and the third federal, by virtue of mutual compact. In all these ways is Christ in conjunction with his church, and in every one of them, in a way singular and peculiar.

1. The first conjunction of distinct persons is natural. God hath made all mankind 'of one blood;' Acts xvii. 26. Whereby there is a cognation and alliance between them all. Hence every man is every man's brother or neighbour, unto whom loving-kindness is to be shewed; Luke x. 36.

And this conjunction was between Christ and the church; as the apostle declares, Heb. ii. 14, 15. 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Hence 'both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one;' ver. 11. His infinite condescension in coming into this communion and conjunction of nature with us, was before declared: but it is not common, like that between all other men, partakers of the same nature. There are two things wherein it was peculiar and eminent.

1. This conjunction between him and the church, did not arise from a necessity of nature, but from a voluntary act of his will. The conjunction that is between all others is necessary. Every man is every man's brother, whether he will or no, by being a man. Natural generation communicating to every one his subsistence in the same nature, prevents all acts of their own will and choice. With the Lord Christ it was otherwise, as the text affirms; for such reasons as are there expressed, he did by an act of his own will partake of flesh and blood, or came into this conjunction with us. He did it of his own choice, because the children did partake of the same. He would be what the children were. Wherefore, the conjunction of Christ in human nature with the church, is ineffably distinct from that common conjunction which is amongst all others in the same nature. And therefore, although it should not be meet amongst mere men, that one should act and suffer in the stead of others, because they are all thus related to one another as it were whether they will or no; yet this could not reach the Lord Christ, who in a strange and wonderful manner came into this conjunction by a mere act of his own.

2. He came into it on this design, and for this only end, namely, that in our nature taken to be his own, he might do and suffer what was to be done and suffered for the church; so it is added in the text; 'That by death he might destroy him who had the power of death; and deliver them who through fear of death were subject to bondage.' This was the only

end of his conjunction in nature with the church; and this puts the case between him and it, at a vast distance from what is or may be between other men.

It is a foolish thing to argue, that because a mere participation of the same nature among men, is not sufficient to warrant the righteousness of punishing one for another; that, therefore, the conjunction in the same nature betwixt Christ and the church, is not a sufficient and just foundation of his suffering for us, and in our stead; for by an act of his own will and choice, he did partake of our nature, and that for this very end, that therein he might suffer for us, as the Holy Ghost expressly declares. Amongst others there neither is nor can be any thing of this nature, and so no objection from what is equal or unequal amongst them, can arise against what is equal between Christ and the church. And herein is he glorious and precious unto them that believe, as we shall see immediately.

2. There is a mystical conjunction between Christ and the church, which answers all the most strict, real, or moral unions or conjunctions between other persons or things. Such is the conjunction between the head of a body and its members, or the tree of the vine and its branches, which are real; or between a husband and wife, which is moral and real also. That there is such a conjunction between Christ and his church, the Scripture plentifully declares, as also that it is the foundation of the equity of his suffering in its stead. So speaks the apostle, Eph. v. 25—32. 'Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church,' that is, his wife, the bride, the lamb's wife, 'and gave himself for it,' &c. Being the head and husband of the church, which was to be sanctified and saved, and could be so no otherwise but by his blood and sufferings, he was both meet so to suffer, and it was righteous also that what he did and suffered should be imputed unto them for whom he both did it, and suffered. Let the adversaries of the glory of Christ assign any one instance of such a conjunction, union, and relation between any amongst mankind, as is between Christ and the church, and they may give some countenance unto their cavils against his obedience and sufferings in our stead, with the imputation of what he did and suffered unto us. But the glory of Christ is singular herein, and as such it appears unto them

by whom the mystery of it is in any measure spiritually apprehended.

But yet it will be said, that this mystical conjunction of Christ with his church is consequential unto what he did and suffered for it; for it ensues on the conversion of men unto him. For it is by faith that we are implanted into him. Until that be actually wrought in us, we have no mystical conjunction with him. He is not a head, or a husband unto unregenerate, unsanctified, unbelievers, whilst they continue so to be; and such was the state of the whole church when Christ suffered for us; Rom. v. 8. Eph. ii. 5. There was, therefore, no such mystical conjunction between him and the church, as to render it meet and equal that he should suffer in its stead. Wherefore, the church is the effect of the work of redemption, that which rose out of it, which was made and constituted by it; and cannot be so the object of it, as that which was to be redeemed by virtue of an antecedent conjunction with it. I answer,

1. Although this mystical conjunction is not actually consummate without an actual participation of the Spirit of Christ, yet the church of the elect was designed antecedently unto all his sufferings, to be his spouse and wife, so as that he might love her and suffer for her; so it is said, Hos. xii. 13. 'Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.' Howbeit, she was not his married wife, until after he had served for her, and thereby purchased her to be his wife; yet as he served for her, she is called his wife, because of his love unto her, and because she was so designed to be upon his service. So was the church designed to be the spouse of Christ in the counsel of God, whereon he loved her, and gave himself for her.

Hence, in the work of redemption the church was the object of it, as designed to be the spouse of Christ; and the effect of it, inasmuch as that thereby it was made meet for the full consummation of that alliance; as the apostle expressly declares, Eph. v. 25—27.

2. Antecedently unto all that the Lord Christ did and suffered for the church, there was a supreme act of the will of God the Father, giving all the elect unto him, intrusting them with him, to be redeemed, sanctified, and saved; as himself declares, John xvii. 6. 9. x. 14—16. And on these grounds

this mystical conjunction between Christ and the church hath its virtue and efficacy before it be actually consummate.

3. There is a federal conjunction between distinct persons; and as this is various, according unto the variety of the interests and ends of them that enter into it; so that is most eminent, where one, by the common consent of all that are concerned, undertakes to be a sponsor or surety for others, to do and answer what on their part is required of them for attaining the ends of the covenant. So did the Lord Christ undertake to be surety of the new covenant in behalf of the church, Heb. vii. 22. and thereon tendered himself unto God to do and suffer for them, in their stead, and on their behalf, whatever was required, that they might be sanctified and saved. These things I have treated of at large elsewhere, as containing a great part of the mystery of the wisdom of God in the salvation of the church. Here, therefore, I do only observe, that this is that whereby the mystical conjunction that was between Christ and the church, whereon it was meet, just, and equal in the sight of God, that what he did and suffered should be imputed unto us, is completed.

These are some of the foundations of that mystery of transmitting the sins of the church, as unto the guilt and punishment of them, from the sinners themselves unto another, every way innocent, pure, and righteous in himself, which is the life, soul, and centre of all Scripture revelations. And herein is he exceedingly glorious, and precious unto them that believe. No heart can conceive, no tongue can express the glory of Christ herein. Now because his infinite condescension and love herein have been spoken to before, I shall here only instance its greatness in some of its effects.

1. It shines forth in the exaltation of the righteousness of God in the forgiveness of sins. There is no more adequate conception of the divine nature, than that of justice in rule and government. Hereunto it belongs to punish sin according unto its desert; and herein consisted the first actings of God as the governor of the rational creation; they did so in the eternal punishment of the angels that sinned, and the casting of Adam out of Paradise, an emblem also of everlasting ruin. Now all the church, all the elect

of God are sinners; they were so in Adam; they have been and are so in themselves. What doth become the justice of God to do thereon? Shall it dismiss them all unpunished? Where then is that justice which spared not the angels who sinned, nor Adam at the first? Would this procedure have any consonancy thereunto, be reconcilable unto it? Wherefore, the establishment of the righteousness of God on the one hand, and the forgiveness of sin on the other, seem so contradictory, as that many stumble and fall at it eternally. See Rom. x. 3, 4.

But in this interposition of Christ, in this translation of punishment from the church unto him, by virtue of his conjunction therewith, there is a blessed harmony between the righteousness of God, and the forgiveness of sins; the exemplification whereof, is his eternal glory. 'O blessed change! O sweet permutation!' as Justin Martyr speaks.

By virtue of his union with the church, which of his own accord he entered into, and his undertaking therein to answer for it in the sight of God, it was a righteous thing with God, to lay the punishment of all our sins upon him, so as that he might freely and graciously pardon them all, to the honour and exaltation of his justice, as well as of his grace and mercy; Rom. iii. 24—26.

Herein is he glorious in the sight of God, angels, and men. In him there is at the same time, in the same divine actings, a glorious resplendency of justice and mercy; of the one in punishing, of the other in pardoning. The appearing inconsistency between the righteousness of God and the salvation of sinners, wherewith the consciences of convinced persons are exercised and terrified, and which is the rock at which most of them split themselves into eternal ruin, is herein removed and taken away. In his cross were divine holiness and vindictive justice exercised and manifested; and through his triumph, grace and mercy, are exerted to the utmost. This is that glory which ravisheth the hearts, and satiates the souls of them that believe. For what can they desire more, what is farther needful unto the rest and composure of their souls, than at one view to behold God eternally well pleased in the declaration of his righteousness, and the exercise of his mercy, in order unto their salvation? In due apprehensions hereof, let my soul live;

in the faith hereof let me die, and let present admiration of this glory make way for the eternal enjoyment of it in its beauty and fulness.

He is glorious in that the law of God in its preceptive part, or as unto the obedience which it required, was perfectly fulfilled and accomplished. That it should be so, was absolutely necessary from the wisdom, holiness, and righteousness of him, by whom it was given. For what could be more remote from those divine perfections, than to give a law, which never was to be fulfilled in them unto whom it was given, and who were to have the advantages of it? This could not be done by us; but through the obedience of Christ, by virtue of this his mystical conjunction with the church, the law was so fulfilled in us by being fulfilled for us, as that the glory of God in the giving of it, and annexing eternal rewards unto it, is exceedingly exalted. See Rom. viii. 3, 4,

This is that glory of Christ whereof one view by faith, will scatter all the fears, answer all the objections, and give relief against all the despondencies of poor, tempted, doubting souls; and an anchor it will be unto all believers, which they may cast within the veil, to hold them firm and steadfast, in all trials, storms, and temptations in life and death.

CHAP. X.

The glory of Christ in the communication of himself unto believers.

ANOTHER instance of the glory of Christ, which we are to behold here by faith, and hope that we shall do so by sight hereafter, consists in the mysterious communication of himself and all the benefits of his mediation, unto the souls of them that do believe, to their present happiness and future eternal blessedness.

Hereby he becomes theirs as they are his; which is the life, the glory, and consolation of the church; Cant. vi. 3. ii. 16. iii. 10. He and all that he is being appropriated unto them

by virtue of their mystical union. There is, there must be, some ground, formal reason, and cause of this relation between Christ and the church, whereby he is theirs, and they are his; he is in them, and they in him; so as it is not between him and other men in the world.

The apostle, speaking of this communication of Christ unto the church, and the union between them, which doth ensue thereon, affirms that it is a great mystery; for 'I speak,' saith he, 'concerning Christ and the church;' Eph. v. 32.

I shall very briefly inquire into the causes, ways, and means of this mysterious communication, whereby he is made to be ours, to be in us, to dwell with us, and all the benefits of his mediation to belong unto us. For, as was said, it is evident that he doth not thus communicate himself unto all by natural necessity, as the sun gives light equally unto the whole world; nor is he present with all by a ubiquity of his human nature; nor, as some dream, by a diffusion of his rational soul into all; nor doth he become ours by a carnal eating of him in the sacrament; but this mystery proceeds from, and depends on, other reasons and causes, as we shall briefly declare.

But yet, before I proceed to declare the way and manner whereby Christ communicateth himself unto the church, I must premise something of divine communications in general, and their glory. And I shall do this by touching a little on the harmony and correspondency that is between the old creation and the new.

1. All being, power, goodness, and wisdom, were originally, essentially, infinitely in God. And in them, with the other perfections of his nature, consisted his essential glory.

2. The old creation was a communication of being and goodness by almighty power, directed by infinite wisdom, unto all things that were created for the manifestation of that glory. This was the first communicati[illegible] unto any thing without himself, and it was exc[illegible] See Psal. xix. 1. Rom. i. 21. And it was a [illegible] framed in the subordination and de[illegible] another; without which they coul[illegible] continuance of their beings. All the earth, and the products of it;

production depends on the sun, and other heavenly bodies, as God declares, Hos. ii. 21, 22. 'I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel.' God hath given a subordination of things in a concatenation of causes, whereon their subsistence doth depend. Yet,

4. In this mutual dependency on, and supplies unto, one another, they all depend on, and are influenced from, God himself, the eternal fountain of being, power, and goodness. 'He hears the heavens;' and in the continuation of this order, by constant divine communication of being, goodness and power, unto all things, God is no less glorified than in the first creation of them; Acts xiv. 15—17. xvii. 24—29.

5. This glory of God is visible in the matter of it, and is obviated unto the reason of mankind; for from his works of creation and providence they may learn his eternal power and Godhead, wherein he is essentially glorious.

6. But by this divine communication God did not intend only to glorify himself in the essential properties of his nature, but his existence also in three persons of Father, Son, and Spirit. For although the whole creation in its first framing, and in its perfection, was and is by an emanation of power and goodness from the divine nature, in the person of the Father, as he is the fountain of the Trinity, whence he is said peculiarly to be the Creator of all things; yet the immediate operation in the creation was from the Son, the power and wisdom of the Father; John i. 1—3. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 3. And as upon the first production of the mass of the creation, it was under the especial care of the Spirit of God to preserve and cherish it, unto the production of all distinct sorts of creatures; Gen. i. 2. so in the continuance of the whole there is an especial operation of the same Spirit in all things. Nothing can subsist one moment by virtue of the dependance which all things have on one another, without a con[illegible]tion of power from him. See Psal. civ. 29, 30.

By thes[illegible] preservation [illegible] and by the [illegible] without th[illegible]

tially glorious, yet was it impossible that his glory should be known unto any but himself. Wherefore, on these divine communications doth depend the whole manifestation of the glory of God. But this is far more eminent, though not in the outward effects of it so visible in the new creation, as we shall see.

1. All goodness, grace, life, light, mercy, and power, which are the springs and causes of the new creation, are all originally in God, in the divine nature, and that infinitely and essentially. In them is God eternally or essentially glorious, and the whole design of the new creation was to manifest his glory in them, by external communications of them and from them.

2. The first communication of, and from these things, is made unto Christ, as the head of the church. For in the first place, it pleased God that in him should all the fulness of these things dwell, so as that the whole new creation might consist in him; Col. i. 17—19. And this was the first egress of divine wisdom for the manifestation of the glory of God in these holy properties of his nature. For,

3. This communication was made unto him as a repository and treasury of all that goodness, grace, life, light, power, and mercy, which were necessary for the constitution and preservation of the new creation. They were to be laid up in him, to be hid in him, to dwell in him; and from him to be communicated unto the whole mystical body designed unto him, that is, the church. And this is the first emanation of divine power and wisdom for the manifestation of his glory in the new creation. This constitution of Christ as the head of it, and the treasuring up in him, all that was necessary for its production and preservation, wherein the church is chosen and preordained in him unto grace and glory, is the spring and fountain of divine glory, in the communications that ensue thereon.

4. This communication unto Christ is, 1. Unto his person; and then, 2. With respect unto his office. It is in the person of Christ that all fulness doth originally dwell. On the assumption of human nature into personal union with the Son of God, all fulness dwells in him bodily; Col. ii. 9. And thereon receiving the Spirit in all fulness, and

not by measure, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were hid in him; Col. ii. 3. and he was filled with the unsearchable riches of divine grace; Eph. iii. 8—11. And the office of Christ is nothing but the way appointed in the wisdom of God, for the communication of the treasures of grace which were communicated unto his person. This is the end of the whole office of Christ in all the parts of it, as he is a priest, a prophet, and a king. They are, I say, nothing but the ways appointed by infinite wisdom for the communication of the grace laid up in his person unto the church. The transcendent glory hereof, we have in some weak measure inquired into.

5. The decree of election prepared, if I may so say, the mass of the new creation. In the old creation, God first prepared and created the mass or matter of the whole, which afterward, by the power of the Holy Spirit, was formed into all the distinct beings whereof the whole creation was to consist; and animated according to their distinct kinds.

And in order unto the production and perfecting of the work of the new creation, God did from eternity in the holy purpose of his will prepare, and in design set apart unto himself, that portion of mankind, whereof it was to consist. Hereby they were only the peculiar matter that was to be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, and the glorious fabric of the church erected out of it. What was said, it may be, of the natural body by the psalmist, is true of the mystical body of Christ, which is principally intended, Psal. cxxxix. 15, 16. 'My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.' The substance of the church whereof it was to be formed, was under the eye of God, as proposed in the decree of election; yet was it as such imperfect. It was not formed or shaped into members of the mystical body; but they were all written in the book of life. And in pursuance of the purpose of God, there they are by the Holy Spirit in the whole course and continuance of time in their

several generations fashioned into the shape designed for them.

6. This therefore is herein, the glorious order of divine communications. From the infinite eternal spring of wisdom, grace, goodness, and love in the Father, all the effects whereof unto this end, were treasured up in the person and mediation of the Son; the Holy Spirit, unto whom the actual application of them is committed, communicates life, light, power, grace, and mercy, unto all that are designed parts of the new creation. Hereon doth God glorify both the essential properties of his nature, his infinite wisdom, power, goodness, and grace, as the only eternal spring of all these things; and also his ineffable glorious existence in three persons, by the order of the communication of these things unto the church, which are originally from his nature. And herein is the glorious truth of the blessed Trinity, which by some is opposed, by some neglected, by most looked on as that which is so much above them, as that it doth not belong unto them, made precious unto them that believe, and becomes the foundation of their faith and hope. In a view of the glorious order of those divine communications, we are in a steady contemplation of the ineffable glory of the existence of the nature of God in the three distinct persons of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

7. According unto this divine order the elect in all ages are by the Holy Spirit moving and acting on that mass of the new creation, formed and animated with spiritual life, light, grace, and power, unto the glory of God. They are not called accidentally according unto the external occasions and causes of their conversion unto God; but in every age, at his own time and season, the Holy Spirit communicates these things unto them, in the order declared unto the glory of God.

8. And in the same manner is the whole new creation preserved every day; every moment there is vital power and strength, mercy and grace, communicated in this divine order to all believers in the world. There is a continual influence from the fountain, from the head, into all the members, whereby they all consist in him, are acted by him, who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good

pleasure. And the apostle declares that the whole constitution of church order, is suited as an external instrument to promote these divine communications, unto all the members of the church itself; Eph. iv. 13—16.

This in general is the order of divine communications, which is for the substance of it continued in heaven, and shall be so unto eternity; for God is, and ever will be, all and in all. But at present, it is invisible unto eyes of flesh, yea, the reason of men. Hence it is by the most despised; they see no glory in it. But let us consider the prayer of the apostle, that it may be otherwise with us; Eph. i. 16—23. For the revelation made of the glory of God in the old creation, is exceeding inferior to that which he makes of himself in the new.

Having premised these things in general, concerning the glory of divine communications, I shall proceed to declare in particular, the grounds and way whereby the Lord Christ communicates himself, and therewithal all the benefits of his mediation, unto them that do believe, as it was before proposed.

We on our part are said herein to receive him, and that by faith; John i. 11, 12. Now where he is received by us, he must be tendered, given, granted, or communicated unto us. And this he is by some divine acts of the Father, and some of his own.

The foundation of the whole is laid in a sovereign act of the will, the pleasure, the grace of the Father. And this is the order and method of all divine operations in the way and work of grace. They originally proceed all from him; and having effected their ends, do return, rest, and centre in him again. See Eph. i. 4—6. Wherefore, that Christ is made ours, that he is communicated unto us, is originally from the free act, grant and donation, of the Father; 1 Cor. i. 30. Rom. v. 15—17. And hereunto sundry things do concur. As, 1. His eternal purpose, which he purposed in himself to glorify his grace in all his elect, by this communication of Christ, and the benefits of his mediation unto them, which the apostle declares at large, Eph. i. 2. His granting all the elect unto Christ to be his own, so to do and suffer for them what was antecedaneously necessary unto the actual communication of himself unto them.

'Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me;' John xvii. 6. 3. The giving of the promise, or the constitution of the rule and law of the gospel, whereby a participation of Christ, an interest in him and all that he is, is made over and assured unto believers; John i. 12. 1 John i. 1—3. 4. An act of Almighty power, working and creating faith in the souls of the elect, enabling them to receive Christ so exhibited and communicated unto them by the gospel; Eph. i. 19, 20. ii. 5—8.

These things which I have but named, have an influence into the glory of Christ herein; for this communication of him unto the church, is an effect of the eternal counsel, wisdom, grace, and power of the Father.

But they are the acts of Christ himself herein, which principally we inquire into, as those which manifest the glory of his wisdom, love, and condescension.

And, 1. He gives and communicates unto them his Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit as peculiarly his, as granted unto him of the Father, as inhabiting in him in all fulness. This Spirit abiding originally as to his person, and immeasurably as unto his effects and operations in himself, he gives unto all believers to inhabit and abide in them also; John xiv. 14. 20. 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Rom. viii. 8. Hence follows an ineffable union between him and them. For as in his incarnation he took our nature into personal union with his own; so herein he takes our persons into a mystical union with himself. Hereby he becomes ours, and we are his.

And herein he is unspeakably glorious. For this mystery of the inhabitation of the same Spirit in him as the head, and the church as his body, animating the whole, is a transcendent effect of divine wisdom. There is nothing of this nature in the whole creation besides; no such union, no such mutual communication. The strictest unions and relations in nature are but shadows of it; Eph. v. 25—32. Herein also is the Lord Christ precious unto them that do believe, but a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence unto the disobedient. This glorious, ineffable effect of his wisdom and grace; this rare, peculiar, singular way of the communication of himself unto the church, is by many despised. They know, it may be, some of them, what it is to be joined unto a harlot so as to become one flesh, but what it is to be

joined unto the Lord so as to become one spirit, they know not. But this principle and spring of the spiritual life of the church, and of all vital spiritual motions towards God, and things heavenly, wherein, and whereby, 'our life is hid with Christ in God,' is the glory, the exaltation, the honour, the security of the church, unto the praise of the grace of God. The understanding of it in its causes, effects, operations, and privileges, wherewith it is accompanied, is to be preferred above all the wisdom in and of the world.

He thus communicates himself unto us, by the formation of a new nature, his own nature in us; so as that the very same spiritual nature is in him, and in the church. Only it is so with this difference, that in him it is in the absolute perfection of all those glorious graces wherein it doth consist; in the church it is in various measures and degrees, according as he is pleased to communicate it. But the same divine nature it is, that is in him and us; for through the precious promises of the gospel, we are made partakers of his divine nature. It is not enough for us, that he hath taken our nature to be his, unless he gives us also his nature to be ours; that is, implants in our souls all those gracious qualifications, as unto the essence and substance of them, wherewith he himself in his human nature is endued. This is that new man, that new creature, that divine nature, that spirit, which is born of the Spirit, that transformation into the image of Christ, that putting of him on, that workmanship of God, whereunto in him we are created, that the Scripture so fully testifieth unto, John iii. 6. Rom. vi. 3—8. 2 Cor. iii. 18. v. 17. Eph. iv. 20. 24. 2 Pet. i. 4.

And that new heavenly nature which is thus formed in believers, as the first vital act of that union which is between Christ and them by the inhabitation of the same Spirit, is peculiarly his nature. For both is it so as it is in him the idea and the exemplar of it in us, inasmuch as we are predestinated to be conformed unto his image; and as it is wrought or produced in our souls by an emanation of power, virtue, and efficiency from him.

This is a most heavenly way of the communication of himself unto us, wherein of God 'he is made unto us wisdom and sanctification.' Hereon he says of his church, 'This now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh;' I see myself, my

own nature in them, whence they are comely and desirable. Hereby he makes way to 'present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish.' On this communication of Christ unto us by the forming of his own nature in us, depends all the purity, the beauty, the holiness, the inward glory of the church. Hereby is it really, substantially, internally separated from the world, and distinguished from all others, who, in the outward forms of things, in the profession and duties of religion, seem to be the same with them. Hereby it becomes the first-fruits of the creation unto God, bearing forth the renovation of his image in the world; herein the Lord Christ is, and will be glorious unto all eternity. I only mention these things, which deserve to be far more largely insisted on.

He doth the same by that actual insition or implantation into himself, which he gives us by faith, which is of his own operation. For hereon two things do ensue; one by the grace or power, the other by the law or constitution of the gospel, which have a great influence into this mystical communication of Christ unto the church.

And the first of these is, that hereby there is communicated unto us, and we do derive supplies of spiritual life, sustenation, motion, strength in grace, and perseverance, from him continually. This is that which himself so divinely teacheth in the parable of the vine and its branches, John xv. 1—5. Hereby is there a continual communication from his all-fulness of grace unto the whole church and all the members of it, unto all the ends and duties of spiritual life. 'They live, nevertheless not they, but Christ liveth in them; and the life which they lead in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God.' And the other, by virtue of the law and constitution of the gospel, is, that hereon his righteousness and all the fruits of his mediation, are imputed unto us; the glory of which mystery the apostle unfolds, Rom. iii—v.

I might add hereunto the mutual inbeing that is between him and believers by love; for the way of the communication of his love unto them, being by the shedding of it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and their returns of love unto them, being wrought in them by an almighty efficiency of the same Spirit, there is that which is

deeply mysterious and glorious in it. I might mention also the continuation of his discharge of all his offices towards us, whereon all our receptions from him, or all the benefits of his mediation, whereof we are made partakers, do depend. But the few instances that have been given of the glory of Christ in this mysterious communication of himself unto his church, may suffice to give us such a view of it, as to fill our hearts with holy admiration and thanksgiving.

CHAP. XI.

The glory of Christ in the recapitulation of all things in him.

In the last place, the Lord Christ is peculiarly and eminently glorious in the recapitulation of all things in him, after they had been scattered and disordered by sin. This the apostle proposeth as the most signal effect of divine wisdom, and the sovereign pleasure of God.

'He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will according unto his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself. That in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in the heavens, and which are on earth, even in him;' Eph. i. 8—10.

For the discovery of the mind of the Holy Ghost in these words, so far as I am at present concerned, namely, as unto the representation of the glory of Christ in them, sundry brief observations must be premised; and in them it will be necessary that we briefly declare the original of all these things in heaven and earth, their primitive order, the confusion that ensued thereon, with their restitution in Christ, and his glory thereby.

God alone hath all being in him. Hence he gives himself that name, 'I AM,' Exod. iii. 14. He was eternally all; when all things else that ever were, or now are, or shall be, were nothing. And when they are, they are no otherwise, but as 'they are of him, and from him, and to him;' Rom. xi. 36.

Moreover his being and goodness are the same. The goodness of God is the meetness of the Divine Being to be communicative of itself in its effects. Hence this is the first notion of the divine nature, infinite being and goodness, in a nature intelligent and self-subsistent. So the apostle declares it, 'He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder;' Heb. xi. 6.

2. In this state of infinite, eternal being and goodness antecedent unto any act of wisdom or power without himself, to give existence unto other things, God was, and is, eternally in himself all that he will be, all that he can be, unto eternity. For where there is infinite being and infinite goodness, there is infinite blessedness and happiness, whereunto nothing can be added. God is always the same. That is his name אתה הוא Psal. cii. 27. 'Thou art he,' always the same. All things that are, make no addition unto God, no change in his state. His blessedness, happiness, self-satisfaction, as well as all other his infinite perfections, were absolutely the same before the creation of any thing, whilst there was nothing but himself, as they are since he hath made all things: for the blessedness of God consists in the ineffable mutual inbeing of the three holy persons in the same nature, with the immanent reciprocal actings of the Father and the Son in the eternal love and complacency of the Spirit. Hereunto nothing can be added, herein no change can be made by any external work or effect of power. Herein doth God act in the perfect knowledge, and perfect love of his own perfections, unto an infinite acquiescency therein, which is the divine blessedness. This gives us the true notion of the divine nature antecedent unto the manifestation of it made by any outward effects. Infinite being and goodness eternally blessed in the knowledge and enjoyment of itself by inconceivable, ineffable, internal actings, answering the manner of its subsistence, which is in three distinct persons.

3. This being and goodness of God by his own will and pleasure acting themselves in infinite wisdom and power, produced the creation of all things. Herein he communicated a finite, limited, dependent being and goodness unto other things without himself. For all being and goodness being, as was said, in him alone, it was necessary that the

first outward work and effect of the divine nature must be the communication of being and goodness into other things. Wherefore as when he had given unto every thing its being out of nothing by the word of his power, saying, Let them be, and they were; so it is said, that he looked on all that he had made, 'and behold they were exceeding good;' Gen. i. 31. Being and goodness must be the first outward effects of the divine nature, which being wrought by infinite power and wisdom, do represent unto us the glory of God in the creation of all things. Infinite being in self-subsistence, which is necessary in the first cause and spring of all things; infinite goodness to communicate the effect of this being unto that which was not, and infinite wisdom and power in that communication, are gloriously manifested therein.

4. In this state, all things that were made, depended immediately on God himself, without the interposition of any other head of influence or rule. They had the continuance of their being and its preservation, from the immediate actings of these properties of the divine nature whereby they were made; and their dependance on God was by virtue of that law, which was implanted on the principles and powers of their several natures by God himself.

5. Thus 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' He provided himself of two distinct, rational families, that should depend on him according to a law of moral obedience, and thereby give glory to him; with two distinct habitations for them cognate unto their nature and use; heaven above, and the earth beneath. The earth he appointed for the habitation of man, which was every way suited unto the constitution of his nature, the preservation of his being, and the end of his creation in giving glory to God. Heaven he prepared for the habitation of the angels, which was suited unto the constitution of their nature, the preservation of their being, and the end of their creation in giving glory to God. Wherefore, as man had power and dominion over all things here below, and was to use them all unto the glory of God, by which means God received glory from them also, though in themselves brute and inanimate; so the angels had the like dominion over the celestial and etherial bodies, wherewith God had fitted the place of their habitation, that through the contemplation and use of them,

God might have a revenue of glory and praise from them also. To suppose any other race of intellectual creatures, besides angels in heaven, and men on earth, is not only without all countenance from any divine testimony, but it disturbs and disorders the whole representation of the glory of God made unto us in the Scripture, and the whole design of his wisdom and grace as declared therein. Intellectual creatures not comprehended in that government of God, and mystery of his wisdom in Christ which the Scripture reveals, are a chimera framed in the imaginations of some men, scarce duly sensible of what it is to be wise unto sobriety.

6. This order of things was beautiful and comely. Hence were they all said to be 'exceeding good.' For each of these families had their own immediate, distinct, dependance on God. He was the immediate head of them. There was no other common head interposed between God and them. They were not a head unto one another. There were no communications unto them, but what were immediate from God himself. And their union among themselves was in this alone, that all their obedience did meet and centre in God. So God made the heavens and the earth and two distinct families in them for himself.

7. This beautiful order in itself, this union between the two families of God, was disturbed, broken, dissolved by the entrance of sin: for hereby part of the family above, and the whole family below, fell off from their dependance on God, and ceasing to centre in him as their head, they fell into variance and enmity among themselves. For the centre of this union and order being removed and lost, nothing but enmity and confusion remained among them. Hereon to shew that its goodness was lost, God cursed the earth and all that was in it; for it was put in subjection unto man, who was now fallen from him. Howbeit he cursed not the heavens which were in subjection unto the angels, because some of them only left their habitation; and the habitation of the residue was not to be cursed for their sakes. But mankind was wholly gone off from God.

8. The angels that sinned, God utterly rejected for ever as an example of his severity; the whole race of mankind he would not utterly cast off, but determined to recover and save a remnant according to the election of grace; which

how he did it in a way of condecency unto all his divine perfections, I have elsewhere declared.

9. Howbeit he would not restore them into their former state, so as to have again two distinct families each in an immediate dependance on himself, though he left them in different and distinct habitations; Eph. iii. 15. But he would gather them both into one, and that under a new head, in whom the one part should be preserved from sinning, and the other delivered from sin committed.

10. This then is that which the apostle declares in these words, 'To gather together in one all things which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in him.' And so he again expresseth it, Col. i. 20. 'To reconcile all things unto himself in him, whether they are things in heaven, or things in earth;' all things were fallen into disorder and confusion by sin; they were fallen off from God into variance among themselves. God would not restore them into their first order in an immediate dependance on his divine perfections. He would no longer keep them in two distinct families; but he would in his infinite wisdom and goodness gather them up into one common head, on whom they should have their immediate dependance, and be reconciled again among themselves.

11. This new head, wherein God hath gathered up all things in heaven and earth into one; one body, one family, on whom is all their dependance, in whom they all now consist, is Jesus Christ the Son of God incarnate. See 1 Cor. xi. 3. Eph. i. 21—23. This glory was reserved for him; none other could be meet for it, or worthy of it. See Col. i. 17—20.

12. To answer all the ends of this new head of God's recollected family, all power in heaven and earth, all fulness of grace and glory, is committed unto him. There is no communication from God, no act of rule towards this family, no supply of virtue, power, grace, or goodness unto angels or men, but what is immediately from this new head whereinto they are gathered. In him they all consist, on him do they depend, unto him are they subject; in their relation unto him doth their peace, union, and agreement among themselves consist. This is the recapitulation of all things intended by the apostle.

13. It is true, that he acts distinctly and variously towards the two parts of the recollected family of angels and men, according as their different states and conditions do require. For, 1. We had need of a reparation by redemption and grace, which the angels had not. 2. Angels were capable of immediate confirmation in glory, which we are not, until we come to heaven. Therefore, 1. He assumed our nature that it might be repaired; which he did not the nature of the angels. 2. He gives us union unto himself, by his Spirit, which exalts us into a dignity and honour, meet for fellowship with them in the same family.

This is a brief account of the mysterious work of divine wisdom in the recapitulation of all things in Jesus Christ; and herein is he transcendently glorious; or his glory herein is far above our comprehension: yet some things may be observed to direct us in the view and contemplation of it. As,

1. He alone was a meet and capable subject of it. He alone could bear the weight of this glory. No mere creature in heaven or earth was meet to be thus made the head of the whole new creation of God. In none of them could all things consist. None of them was meet to be thus in the place of God, to have all things depend upon him, and be put in subjection unto him, so as that there should be no communication between God and the creation, but by and through him alone. Wherefore, when the Holy Ghost assigns this glory unto him, he so describes him, as that we may discern his singular meetness for it; as that he is 'the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power;' Heb. i. 3. That he is 'the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, by whom all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist;' Col. i. 15—19. Such a one alone and no other was meet to bear and uphold this glory. And the glory of his person is such as that it is the blessedness of all creatures to centre in this glory of his office.

2. This is that glory which God designed unto his only Son incarnate; and it gives us a little view into the glory of

that mystery, the wonderful eternal design of God to glorify himself in the incarnation of Christ. God would have his eternal, his only-begotten Son to be incarnate, to take our nature on him, to be made man. What is his design in this incomprehensible work of his wisdom, love, and power? Indeed, in the first place, it was for the redemption of the church, by the sacrifice of himself and other acts of his mediation. But there is that which is more general and comprehensive, and wherein all the concerns of the glory of God do centre. And this was that he might 'gather all things into one' in him; that the whole creation, especially that which was to be eternally blessed, should have a new head given unto it for its sustentation, preservation, order, honour, and safety. All springs are in him, and all streams are unto him, and in and by him unto God. Who can express the divine beauty, order, and harmony of all things that are in this their recapitulation in Christ? The union and communion between angels and men, the order of the whole family in heaven and earth, the communication of life, grace, power, mercy, and consolation to the church, the rule and disposal of all things unto the glory of God, do all depend hereon. This glory God designed unto his Son incarnate, and it was the greatest, the highest that could be communicated unto him. For, as the apostle observes, All things are put in subjection unto him, he only excepted who doth so make them subject, that is, God the Father; 1 Cor. xv. 27.

There is no contemplation of the glory of Christ that ought more to affect the hearts of them that do believe, with delight and joy, than this of the recapitulation of all things in him. One view by faith of him in the place of God as the supreme head of the whole creation, moving, acting, guiding, and disposing of it, will bring in spiritual refreshment unto a believing soul.

And it will do so the more, in that it gives a glorious representation of his divine nature also. For that any mere creature should thus be a head of life, motion, and power, as also of sovereign rule, and disposal of the whole new creation, with all things reduced into order thereby, is not only an impious but a foolish imagination.

Did we live more in the contemplation of this glory of Christ, and of the wisdom of God in this recapitulation of all

things in him, there is not any thing of our duty which it would not mind us of, nor any thing of privilege which it would not give us a sense of, as might easily be demonstrated.

3. In particular, the Lord Christ is glorious herein, in that the whole breach made on the glory of God in the creation by the entrance of sin, is hereby repaired and made up. The beauty and order of the whole creation consisted in its dependance on God by the obedience of the rational part of it, angels and men. Thereby were the being, the goodness, the wisdom, and power of God made manifest. But the beauty of this order was defaced, and the manifestation of the divine perfections unto the glory of God eclipsed by the entrance of sin. But all is restored, repaired, and made up, in this recapitulation of all things in one new head Christ Jesus; yea, the whole curious frame of the divine creation is rendered more beautiful than it was before. Hence the whole of it groaneth for the interest of each part in this restoration of all things. Whatever there is of order, of beauty, of glory in heaven above, or in earth beneath, it all ariseth from this new relation of the creation unto the Son of God. Whatever is not gathered into one, even in him, in its place, and according to its measure, is under darkness, disorder, and the curse. Hence the Jews have a saying, that 'in the days of the Messiah all things shall be healed but the serpent,' that is, the devil, and wicked men, which are as his seed.

4. He is glorious herein, in that he is appointed as the only means of exerting, and expressing all the treasures of the infinite wisdom of God towards his creatures. The wisdom of God is absolutely, always, and in all things infinite. God doth not, God cannot act with more wisdom in one thing than in another; as in the creation of man, than in that of any inanimate creatures. In the first creation infinite wisdom was the inseparable companion of infinite power. 'How marvellous are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all.' But when the effects of this divine wisdom in their principal beauty and glory were defaced, greater treasures of wisdom were required unto their reparation. And in this recollection of all things in Christ did God lay them forth unto the utmost of whatever he will do

in dealing with his creatures; so the apostle expresseth it, Eph. iii. 10. 'To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' By the recapitulation of all things into this one head, the manifold various unsearchable wisdom of God was made known unto the angels themselves. They knew not before of the design and work of God after the entrance of sin. These could not comprehend the wisdom that might repair that loss. They knew not that divine wisdom had another way to take herein, at least they knew not what way that should be. But hereby the manifold wisdom of God, his infinite wisdom in the treasures of it, able by various ways to attain the ends of his glory, was made known unto them. Herein, namely, in the recollection of all things in Christ, divine wisdom hath made known and represented itself in all its stores and treasures unto angels and men. 'In him are hid,' and by him are displayed, 'all the treasures of wisdom;' Col. ii. 3. Herein is he glorious, and will be so to eternity.

5. He is glorious herein, in that hereby firmness and security is communicated unto the whole new creation. The first creation in its order was a curious and glorious fabric. But every thing depending immediately on God by virtue of the principles of its own nature and the law of its obedience, all was brought unto a loss by the sin of angels and men. But now every thing that belongs unto this new creation, even every believer in the world as well as the angels in heaven being gathered together in this one head, the whole and all, and every part and member of it, even every particular believer are secured from ruin, such as befell all things before. In this new head they have an indissoluble consistency.

But 'manum de tabula.' I shall insist on no more instances of this nature which plentifully offer themselves in the Scripture unto us. For who can declare this glory of Christ? Who can speak of these things as he ought? I am so far from designing to set forth the whole of it, that I am deeply sensible how little a portion I can comprehend of the least part of it. Nor can I attain unto any satisfaction in these meditations, but what issue in an humble admiration.

CHAP. XII.

Differences between our beholding the glory of Christ by faith in this world, and by sight in heaven. The first of them explained.

'We walk' here 'by faith, and not by sight;' 2 Cor. v. 7. That is, in the life of God, in our walking before him, in the whole of our obedience therein, we are under the conduct and influence of faith, and not of sight. Those are the two spiritual powers of our souls; by the one whereof, we are made partakers of grace, holiness and obedience in this life; and by the other, of eternal blessedness and glory.

Both these, namely, faith and sight, the one in this life, the other in that which is to come, have the same immediate object. For they are the abilities of the soul to go forth unto, and to embrace their object. Now this object of them both, is the glory of Christ, as hath been declared, as also what that glory is, and wherein it doth consist; wherefore my present design is to inquire into the difference that is between our beholding of the glory of Christ in this world by faith, and the vision which we shall have of the same glory hereafter.

The latter of these is peculiarly intended in that prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ for his disciples, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.' But I shall not distinctly insist upon it, my design being another way, respecting principally the work of God in this life, and the privileges which we enjoy thereby. Yet I shall now take a short prospect of that also; not absolutely, but in the differences that are between faith and sight, or the view which we have of the glory of Christ in this world by faith, and that which they enjoy by vision who are above; the object of them both being adequately the same.

But herein also, I shall have respect only unto some of those things which concern our practice, or the present immediate exercise of faith. For I have elsewhere handled at large the state of the church above, or that of present glory. Giving an account of the administration of the office of Christ in heaven, his presence among the glorified souls, and

the adoration of God under his conduct. I have also declared the advantage which they have by being with him, and the prospect they have of his glory. Therefore, these things must here be only touched on.

These differences may be referred unto two heads: 1. Those which arise from the different natures and actings of those means and instruments whereby we apprehend this glory of Christ, namely, faith and vision. And, 2. Those that arise from the different effects produced by them. Instances in each kind shall be given.

1. The view which we have of the glory of Christ by faith in this world, is obscure, dark, inevident, reflexive. So the apostle declares, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 'Now we see through a glass darkly' δι ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι. 'Through' or by 'a glass in a riddle,' a parable, a dark saying. There is a double figurative limitation put upon our view of the glory of Christ, taken from the two ways of our perception of what we apprehend, namely, the sight of things, and the hearing of words.

The first is, that we have this view not directly but reflexively and by way of a representation, as in a glass. For I take the glass here, not to be optical or a prospective which helps the sight, but a speculum, or a glass which reflects an image of what we do behold. It is a sight like that which we have of a man in a glass, when we see not his person or substance, but an image or representation of them only, which is imperfect.

The shadow or image of this glory of Christ is drawn in the gospel, and therein we behold it as the likeness of a man represented unto us in a glass; and although it be obscure and imperfect in comparison of his own real, substantial glory, which is the object of vision in heaven; yet is it the only image and representation of himself, which he hath left, and given unto us in this world. That woful cursed invention of framing images of him out of stocks and stones however adorned, or representations of him by the art of painting, are so far from presenting unto the minds of men any thing of his real glory, that nothing can be more effectual to divert their thoughts and apprehensions from it. But by this figurative expression of seeing in a glass, the apostle

declares the comparative imperfection of our present view of the glory of Christ.

But the allusion may be taken from an optic glass or tube also, whereby the sight of the eye is helped in beholding things at a great distance. By the aid of such glasses men will discover stars or heavenly lights, which by reason of their distance from us, the eye of itself is no way able to discern. And those which we do see, are more fully represented, though remote enough from being so, perfectly. Such a glass is the gospel, without which we can make no discovery of Christ at all, but in the use of it we are far enough from beholding him in the just dimensions of his glory.

And he adds another intimation of this imperfection, in an allusion unto the way whereby things are proposed and conveyed unto the minds and apprehensions of men. Now this is by words. And these are either plain, proper, and direct; or dark, figurative, and parabolical. And this latter way makes the conception of things to be difficult and imperfect; and by reason of the imperfection of our view of the glory of Christ by faith in this world, the apostle saith, it is in *αἰνίγματι* in 'a riddle.' These *αἰνίγματα* the psalmist calls חידות 'dark sayings;' Psal. lxxviii. 2.

But here it must be observed, that the description and representation of the Lord Christ and his glory in the gospel, is not absolutely, or in itself either dark or obscure. Yea, it is perspicuous, plain, and direct. Christ is therein evidently set forth crucified, exalted, glorified. But the apostle doth not here discourse concerning the way or means of the revelation of it unto us, but of the means or instrument whereby we comprehend that revelation. This is our faith, which as it is in us, being weak and imperfect, we comprehend the representation that is made unto us of the glory of Christ, as men do the sense of a dark saying, a riddle, a parable, that is, imperfectly, and with difficulty.

On the account hereof we may say at present, 'how little a portion is it that we know of him?' as Job speaks of God, chap. xxvi. 14. How imperfect are our conceptions of him? How weak are our minds in their management? There is no part of his glory that we can fully comprehend. And what

we do comprehend (as there is a comprehension in faith, Eph. iii. 18.) we cannot abide in the steady contemplation of. For ever blessed be that sovereign grace, whence it is that 'he who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of his own glory in the face of Jesus Christ,' and therein of the glory of Christ himself; that he hath so revealed him unto us, as that we may love him, admire him, and obey him; but constantly, steadily, and clearly to behold his glory in this life we are not able, 'for we walk by faith, and not by sight.'

Hence our sight of him here, is as it were by glances, liable to be clouded by many interpositions. 'Behold he standeth behind the wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing' (מציץ flourishing) 'himself at the lattice;' Cant. ii. 9. There is a great interposition between him and us, as a wall; and the means of the discovery of himself unto us, as through a window and lattice, include a great instability and imperfection in our view and apprehension of him. There is a wall between him and us, which yet he standeth behind. Our present mortal state is this wall, which must be demolished before we can see him as he is. In the meantime he looketh through the windows of the ordinances of the gospel. He gives us sometimes, when he is pleased to stand in those windows, a view of himself; but it is imperfect, as is our sight of a man through a window. The appearances of him at these windows are full of refreshment unto the souls of them that do believe. But our view of them is imperfect, transient, and doth not abide; we are for the most part quickly left to bemoan what we have lost. And then our best is but to cry, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before thee?' When wilt thou again give me to see thee, though but as through the windows? Alas, what distress do we ofttimes sit down in, after these views of Christ and his glory! But he proceeds farther yet; 'and flourishes himself through the lattices.' This displaying of the glory of Christ, called the flourishing of himself, is by the promises of the gospel as they are explained in the ministry of the word. In them are represented unto us the desirable beauties and glories of Christ;

how precious, how amiable is he as represented in them! How are the souls of believers ravished with the views of them! Yet is this discovery of him also but as through a lattice. We see him but by parts, unsteadily and unevenly.

Such, I say, is the sight of the glory of Christ which we have in this world by faith. It is dark, it is but in part.* It is but weak, transient, imperfect, partial. It is but little that we can at any time dicover of it; it is but a little while, that we can abide in the contemplation of what we do discover, 'rara hora, brevis mora.' Sometimes it is unto us as the sun when it is under a cloud, we cannot perceive it. When he hideth his face, who then can behold him? As Job speaks, so may we, 'Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him;' chap. xxiii. 8, 9. Which way soever we turn ourselves, and what duties soever we apply ourselves unto, we can obtain no distinct view of his glory. Yet on the other hand, it is sometimes as the sun when it shines in its brightness, and we cannot bear the rays of it. In infinite condescension he says unto his church, 'Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me;' Cant. vi. 5. As if he could not bear that overcoming affectionate love, which looks through the eyes of the church in its acting of faith on him. Ah! how much more do we find our souls overcome with his love, when at any time he is pleased to make any clear discoveries of his glory unto us!

Let us now on the other hand, take a little consideration of that vision which we shall have of the same glory in heaven, that we may compare them together.

Vision, or the sight which we shall have of the glory of Christ in heaven, is immediate, direct, intuitive, and therefore steady, even, and constant. And it is so on a double account. 1. Of the object which shall be proposed unto us. 2. Of the visive power or faculty wherewith we shall be endued; from the imperfection of both which in this world, ariseth the imperfection of our view of the glory of Christ by faith, as hath been declared.

1. The object of it will be real and substantial. Christ himself in his own person with all his glory, shall be con-

tinually with us, before us, proposed unto us. We shall no longer have an image, a representation of him, such as is the delineation of his glory in the gospel. 'We shall see him,' saith the apostle, 'face to face;' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. which he opposeth unto our seeing him darkly as in a glass, which is the utmost that faith can attain to. 'We shall see him as he is;' 1 John iii. 2. not as now in an imperfect description of him. As a man sees his neighbour when they stand and converse together face to face; so shall we see the Lord Christ in his glory, and not as Moses who had only a transient sight of some parts of the glory of God, when he caused it to pass by him.

There will be use herein of our bodily eyes, as shall be declared. For, as Job says, 'in our flesh shall we see our Redeemer, and our eyes shall behold him;' chap. xix. 25—27. That corporeal sense shall not be restored unto us, and that glorified above what we can conceive, but for this great use of the eternal beholding of Christ and his glory. Unto whom is it not a matter of rejoicing, that with the same eyes wherewith they see the tokens and signs of him in the sacrament of the supper, they shall behold himself immediately, in his own person. But principally, as we shall see immediately, this vision is intellectual. It is not therefore the mere human nature of Christ, that is the object of it, but his divine person, as that nature subsisteth therein. What is that perfection which we shall have (for that which is perfect must come and do away that which is in part) in the comprehension of the hyspotatical union, I understand not; but this I know, that in the immediate beholding of the person of Christ, we shall see a glory in it a thousand times above what here we can conceive. The excellencies of infinite wisdom, love, and power therein, will be continually before us. And all the glories of the person of Christ, which we have before weakly and faintly inquired into, will be in our sight for evermore.

Hence the ground and cause of our blessedness is, that 'we shall be ever with the Lord;' 1 Thess. iv. 17. As himself prays, 'that we may be with him where he is, to behold his glory.' Here we have some dark views of it, we cannot perfectly behold it, until we are with him where he is.

Thereon our sight of him will be direct, intuitive, and constant.

There is a glory, there will be so subjectively in us in the beholding of this glory of Christ, which is at present incomprehensible. For 'it doth not yet appear what we ourselves shall be;' 1 John iii. 2. Who can declare what a glory it will be in us to behold this glory of Christ? And how excellent then is that glory of Christ itself?

This immediate sight of Christ, is that which all the saints of God in this life do breathe and pant after. Hence are they willing to be dissolved, or 'desire to depart, that they may be with Christ, which is best for them;' Phil. i. 23. They choose 'to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord;' 2 Cor. v. 8. Or that they may enjoy the inexpressibly longed for sight of Christ in his glory. Those who do not so long for it, whose souls and minds are not frequently visited with earnest desires after it, unto whom the thoughts of it are not their relief in trouble, and their chiefest joy, are carnal, blind, and cannot see afar off. He that is truly spiritual, entertains and refresheth himself with thoughts hereof continually.

2. It will be so from that visive power or faculty of beholding the glory of Christ, which we shall then receive. Without this we cannot see him as he is. When he was transfigured in the mount, and had on his human nature some reflections of his divine glory, his disciples that were with him, were rather amazed, than refreshed by it; Matt. xvii. 4. They saw his glory, but spake thereon 'they knew not what;' Luke ix. 30. 33. And the reason hereof was, because no man in this life can have a visive power, either spiritual or corporeal, directly and immediately to behold the real glory of Christ.

Should the Lord Jesus appear now to any of us in his majesty and glory, it would not be unto our edification nor consolation. For we are not meet nor able, by the power of any light or grace that we have received, or can receive, to bear the immediate appearance and representation of them. His beloved apostle John had leaned on his bosom probably many a time in this life, in the intimate familiarities of love. But when he afterward appeared unto him in

his glory, 'he fell at his feet as dead;' Rev. i. 17. And when he appeared unto Paul, all the account he could give thereof was, 'that he saw a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun,' whereon he and all that were with him, 'fell to the ground;' Acts xxvi. 13, 14.

And this was one reason why in the days of his ministry here on earth, his glory was veiled with the infirmities of the flesh, and all sorts of sufferings, as we have before related. The church in this life is no way meet, by the grace which it can be made partaker of, to converse with him in the immediate manifestations of his glory.

And therefore those who dream of his personal reign on the earth before the day of judgment, unless they suppose that all the saints shall be perfectly glorified also (which is only to bring down heaven to the earth for awhile, to no purpose), provide not at all for the edification or consolation of the church. For no present grace advanced unto the highest degree whereof in this world it is capable, can make us meet for an immediate converse with Christ in his unveiled glory.

How much more abominable is the folly of men, who would represent the Lord Christ in his present glory by pictures and images of him? When they have done their utmost with their burnished glass and gildings, an eye of flesh cannot only behold it, but if it be guided by reason, see it contemptible and foolish. But the true glory of Christ neither inward nor outward sight can bear the rays of it in this life.

The dispensation which we are meet for, is only that of his presence with us by his Spirit. 'We know him now no more after the flesh;' 2 Cor. v. 16. We are advanced above that way and means of the knowledge of him by the fleshly carnal ordinances of the Old Testament. And we know him not according unto that bodily presence of his, which his disciples enjoyed in the days of his flesh. We have attained somewhat above that also. For such was the nature of his ministry here on earth, that there could not be the promised dispensation of the Spirit until that was finished. Therefore he tells his disciples that 'it was expedient for them, that he should go away and send the Spirit to them;' John xvi. 7. Hereon they had a clearer view of the glory

of Christ, than they could have by beholding him in the flesh. This is our spiritual posture and condition. We are past the knowledge of him according to the flesh; we cannot attain nor receive the sight of him in glory; but 'the life which we now lead, is by the faith of the Son of God.'

I shall not here inquire into the nature of this vision, or the power and ability which we shall have in heaven to behold the glory of Christ. Some few things may be mentioned, as it relates unto our minds, and our bodies also, after the resurrection.

1. For the mind, it shall be perfectly freed from all that darkness, unsteadiness, and other incapacities, which here it is accompanied with; and whereby it is weakened, hindered, and obstructed, in the exercise of faith. And they are of two sorts. First, such as are the remainders of that depravation of our natures, which came upon us by sin. Hereby our minds became wholly vain, dark, and corrupt, as the Scripture testifieth, utterly unable to discern spiritual things in a due manner. This is so far cured and removed in this life by grace, as that those who were darkness, do become light in the Lord, or are enabled to live unto God under the conduct of a new spiritual light communicated unto them. But it is so cured and removed in part only, it is not perfectly abolished. Hence are all our remaining weaknesses and incapacities in discerning things spiritual and eternal, which we yet groan under, and long for deliverance from. No footsteps, no scars or marks that ever it had place in our minds shall abide in glory; Eph. v. 27. Nothing shall weaken, disturb, or incapacitate our souls, in acting all their powers unimpeded by vanity, diversions, weakness, inability, upon their proper objects. The excellency hereof in universal liberty and power, we cannot here comprehend; nor can we yet conceive the glory and beauty of those immixed spiritual actings of our minds which shall have no clog upon them, no encumbrance in them, no alloy of dross accompanying of them. One pure act of spiritual sight in discerning the glory of Christ, one pure act of love in cleaving unto God, will bring in more blessedness and satisfaction into our minds, than in this world we are capable of.

2. There is an incapacity in our minds as unto their actings on things spiritual and eternal, that is merely natural from the posture wherein they are, and the figure which they are to make in this life. For they are here clothed with flesh, and that debased and corrupted. Now in this state, though the mind act its conceptions by the body as its organ and instrument; yet is it variously straitened, encumbered, and impeded, in the exercise of its native powers, especially towards things heavenly, by this prison of the flesh, wherein it is immured. There is an angelical excellency in the pure actings of the soul when delivered from all material instruments of them; or when they are all glorified and made suitable helps in its utmost spiritual activity. How and by what degrees our minds shall be freed from these obstructions in their beholding the glory of Christ, shall be afterward declared.

2. Again, a new light, the light of glory, shall be implanted in them. There is a light in nature, which is the power of a man to discern the things of man. An ability to know, perceive, and judge of things natural. It is that 'spirit of a man which is the candle of the Lord searching all the inward parts of the belly;' Prov. xx. 27.

But by the light hereof no man can discern spiritual things in a due manner, as the apostle declares, 1 Cor. ii. 11—15. Wherefore God gives a superior, a supernatural light, the light of faith and grace, unto them whom he effectually calls unto the knowledge of himself by Jesus Christ. 'He shines into their hearts to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of his dear Son.' Howbeit this new light doth not abolish, blot out, or render useless, the other light of nature, as the sun when it riseth, extinguisheth the light of the stars; but it directs it, and rectifies it, as unto its principle, object, and end. Yet is it in itself, a light quite of another nature. But he who hath only the former light, can understand nothing of it, because he hath no taste or experience of its power and operations. He may talk of it, and make inquiries about it, but he knows it not.

Now we have received this light of faith and grace, whereby we discern spiritual things, and behold the glory of Christ in the imperfect manner before described. But

in heaven there shall be a superadded light of glory, which shall make the mind itself 'shine as the firmament;' Dan. xii. 3. I shall only say three things of it. 1. That as the light of grace doth not destroy or abolish the light of nature, but rectify and improve it; so the light of glory shall not abolish or destroy the light of faith and grace, but by incorporating with it render it absolutely perfect. 2. That as by the light of nature, we cannot clearly comprehend the true nature and efficacy of the light of grace, because it is of another kind, and is seen only in its own light; so by the light of grace we cannot absolutely comprehend this light of glory, being of a peculiar kind and nature, seen perfectly only by its own light. It doth not appear what we shall be. 3. That this is the best notion we can have of this light of glory, that in the first instance of its operation, it perfectly transforms the soul into the image and likeness of Christ.

This is the progress of our nature unto its rest and blessedness. The principles remaining in it concerning good and evil, with its practical convictions, are not destroyed, but improved by grace; as its blindness, darkness, and enmity to God, are in part taken away. Being renewed by grace, what it receives here of spiritual life and light, shall never be destroyed but be perfected in glory. Grace renews nature; glory perfects grace; and so the whole soul is brought unto its rest in God. We have an image of it in the blind man whom our Saviour cured; Mark viii. 22—24. He was absolutely blind, born so, no doubt. Upon the first touch his eyes were opened, and he saw, but very obscurely; he saw men walking like trees. But on the second he saw all things clearly. Our minds in themselves are absolutely blind. The first visitation of them by grace, gives them a sight of things spiritual, heavenly, and eternal: but it is obscure and unsteady. The sight of glory makes all things clear and evident.

2. The body as glorified, with its senses, shall have its use and place herein. After we are clothed again with our flesh, we shall see our Redeemer with our eyes. We know not here what power and spirituality there will be in the acts of our glorified bodies. Such they will be, as shall bear a part in eternal blessedness. Holy Stephen, the first

martyr, took up somewhat of glory by anticipation before he died. For when he was brought to his trial before the council, all that sat therein 'looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as the face of an angel;' Acts vi. 15. He had his transfiguration, according unto his measure, answerable unto that of our blessed Saviour in the mount. And by this initial beam of glory, he received such a piercing vivacity and edge on his bodily eyes, that through all those inconceivable distances between the earth and the residence of the blessed, he looked steadfastly into heaven, and 'saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;' Acts vii. 55, 56. Who then can declare what will be the power and acting of this sense of sight when perfectly glorified; or what sweetness and refreshment may be admitted into our souls thereby?

It was a privilege (who would not have longed to partake of it?) to have seen him with our bodily eyes in the days of his flesh, as did the apostles and other his disciples. Howbeit he was not then glorified himself in the manifestation of his glory; nor they who saw him, in the change or transformation of their nature. How great this privilege was, himself declares unto those that so saw him, Matt. xiii. 17. 'Verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see;' whereunto we shall speak immediately. And if this were so excellent a privilege as that we cannot but congratulate them by whom it was enjoyed, how excellent, how glorious will it be, when with these eyes of ours, gloriously purified and strengthened beyond those of Stephen, we shall behold Christ himself immediately in the fulness of his glory! He alone perfectly understands the greatness and excellency hereof, who prayed his Father that those who 'believe in him, may be where he is, so to behold his glory.'

These are some of the grounds of this first difference between our beholding the glory of Christ by faith here, and by immediate vision hereafter. Hence the one is weak, imperfect, obscure, reflexive; the other direct, immediate, even, and constant; and we may stay a little in the contemplation of these things.

This view of the glory of Christ, which we have now

spoken unto, is that which we are breathing and panting after; that which the Lord Christ prays that we may arrive unto; that which the apostle testifies to be our best; the best thing, or state, which our nature is capable of, that which brings eternal rest and satisfaction unto our souls.

Here our souls are burdened with innumerable infirmities, and our faith is clogged in its operations by ignorance and darkness. This makes our best estate and highest attainments to be accompanied with groans for deliverance. 'We which have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of the body;' Rom. viii. 23. Yea, whilst we are in this tabernacle, we groan earnestly, as being burdened, because we are not 'absent from the body and present with the Lord;' 2 Cor. v. 2. 4. 8. The more we grow in faith and spiritual light, the more sensible are we of our present burdens, and the more vehemently do we groan for deliverance into the perfect liberty of the sons of God. This is the posture of their minds who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, in the most eminent degree. The nearer any one is to heaven, the more earnestly he desires to be there, because Christ is there. For the more frequent and steady are our views of him by faith, the more do we long and groan for the removal of all obstructions and interpositions in our so doing. Now groaning is a vehement desire, mixed with sorrow, for the present want of what is desired. The desire hath sorrow, and that sorrow hath joy and refreshment in it; like a shower that falls on a man in a garden in the spring; it wets him, but withal refresheth him with the savour it causeth in the flowers and herbs of the garden, where he is. And this groaning, which, when it is constant and habitual, is one of the choicest effects of faith in this life, respects what we would be delivered from, and what we would attain unto. The first is expressed, Rom. vii. 24. the other in the places now mentioned. And this frame, with an intermixture of some sighs from weariness by the troubles, sorrows, pains, sicknesses of this life, is the best we can here attain unto.

Alas! we cannot here think of Christ, but we are quickly ashamed of, and troubled at, our own thoughts; so confused are they, so unsteady, so imperfect. Commonly they issue

in a groan or a sigh; Oh! when shall we come unto him? when shall we be ever with him? when shall we see him as he is? And if at any time he begins to give more than ordinary evidences and intimations of his glory and love unto our souls, we are not able to bear them, so as to give them any abiding residence in our minds. But ordinarily this trouble and groaning is amongst our best attainments in this world, a trouble which, I pray God, I may never be delivered from, until deliverance do come at once from this state of mortality. Yea, the good Lord increase this trouble more and more in all that believe.

The heart of a believer affected with the glory of Christ, is like the needle touched with the loadstone. It can no longer be quiet, no longer be satisfied in a distance from him. It is put into a continual motion towards him. This motion, indeed, is weak and tremulous. Pantings, breathings, sighings, groanings in prayer, in meditations, in the secret recesses of our minds, are the life of it. However, it is continually pressing towards him. But it obtains not its point; it comes not to its centre and rest in this world.

But now above, all things are clear and serene; all plain and evident in our beholding the glory of Christ; we shall be ever with him, and see him as he is. This is heaven, this is blessedness, this is eternal rest.

The person of Christ in all his glory shall be continually before us; and the eyes of our understandings shall be so gloriously illuminated, as that we shall be able steadily to behold and comprehend that glory.

But alas! here at present our minds recoil, our meditations fail, our hearts are overcome, our thoughts confused, and our eyes turn aside from the lustre of this glory; nor can we abide in the contemplation of it. But there, an immediate, constant view of it, will bring in everlasting refreshment and joy unto our whole souls.

This beholding of the glory of Christ given him by his Father, is indeed subordinate unto the ultimate vision of the essence of God. What that is we cannot well conceive; only we know that the 'pure in heart shall see God.' But it hath such an immediate connexion with it, and subordination unto it, as that without it we can never behold the face of God, as the objective blessedness of our souls. For he is

and shall be to eternity, the only means of communication between God and the church.

And we may take some direction in our looking into and longing after this perfect view of the glory of Christ, from the example of the saints under the Old Testament. The sight which they had of the glory of Christ, for they also saw his glory through the obscurity of its revelation, and its being veiled with types and shadows, was weak and imperfect in the most illuminated believers, much inferior unto what we now have by faith, through the gospel. Yet such it was, as encouraged them to inquire and search diligently into what was revealed; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Howbeit, their discoveries were but dark and confused, such as men have of things at a great distance, or 'in a land that is very far off,' as the prophet speaks, Isa. xxxiii. 16. And the continuance of this veil on the revelation of the glory of Christ, whilst a veil of ignorance and blindness was upon their hearts and minds, proved the ruin of that church in its apostacy, as the apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii. 7. 13, 14. This double veil (the covering covered, the veil veiled) God promised to take away, Isa. xxv. 7. and then shall they turn to the Lord, when they shall be able clearly to behold the glory of Christ; 2 Cor. iii. 16.

But this caused them who were real believers among them to desire, long, and pray for, the removal of these veils, the departure of those shadows, which made it as night unto them in comparison of what they knew would appear, when 'the Sun of righteousness should arise with healing in his wings.' They thought it long ere 'the day did break, and the shadows flee away;' Cant. ii. 17. iv. 6. There was an ἀποκαραδοκία, as the apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 19. a thrusting forth of the head with desire and expectation of the exhibition of the Son of God in the flesh, and the accomplishment of all divine promises therein. Hence he was called 'the Lord whom they sought and delighted in;' Mal. iii. 1.

And great was the spiritual wisdom of believers in those days. They rejoiced and gloried in the ordinances of divine worship, which they did enjoy. They looked on them as their chiefest privilege, and attended unto them with diligence, as an effect of divine wisdom and love, as also because they had a shadow of good things to come. But yet

at the same time they longed and desired that the time of reformation were come, wherein they should all be removed; that so they might behold and enjoy the good things signified by them. And those who did not so, but rested in, and trusted unto, their present institutions, were not accepted with God. Those who were really illuminated did not so, but lived in constant desires after the revelation of the whole mystery of the wisdom of God in Christ, as did the angels themselves; 1 Pet. i. 3. Eph. iii. 9, 10.

In this frame of heart and suitable actings of their souls, there was more of the power of true faith and love than is found among the most at this day. They saw the promises afar of, and were persuaded of them and embraced them; Heb. xi. 13. They reached out the arms of their most intent affections, to embrace the things that were promised. We have an instance of this frame in old Simeon, who so soon as he had taken the child Jesus in his arms, cried out, 'Now Lord, let me depart,' now let me die, this is that which my soul hath longed for; Luke ii. 28, 29.

Our present darkness and weakness in beholding the glory of Christ, is not like theirs. It is not occasioned by a veil of types and shadows, cast on it by the representative institutions of it; it doth not arise from the want of a clear doctrinal revelation of the person and office of Christ; but, as was before declared, it proceedeth from two other causes. First, from the nature of faith itself in comparison of vision. It is not able to look directly into this excellent glory, nor fully to comprehend it. Secondly, from the way of its proposal, which is not substantial of the thing itself, but only of an image of it, as in a glass. But the sight, the view of the glory of Christ, which we shall have in heaven, is much more above that which we now enjoy by the gospel, than what we do, or may so enjoy, is above what they have attained under their types and shadows. There is a far greater distance between the vision of heaven, and the sight which we have now by faith, than is between the sight which we now have, and what they had under the Old Testament. Heaven doth more excel the gospel state, than that state doth the law. Wherefore, if they did so pray, so long for, so desire the removal of their shadows and veils, that they might see what we now see, that they might so behold the

glory of Christ, as we may behold it in the light of the gospel; how much more should we, if we have the same faith with them, the same love (which neither will, nor can be satisfied without perfect fruition), long and pray for the removal of all weakness, of all darkness and interposition, that we may come unto that immediate beholding of his glory, which he so earnestly prayed that we might be brought unto.

To sum up briefly what hath been spoken. There are three things to be considered concerning the glory of Christ, three degrees in its manifestation; the shadow, the perfect image, and the substance itself. Those under the law had only the shadow of it, and of the things that belong unto it; they had not the perfect image of them, Heb. x. 1. Under the gospel we have the perfect image, which they had not; or a clear complete revelation and declaration of it, presenting it unto us as in a glass: but the enjoyment of these things in their substance is referred for heaven; we must be 'where he is, that we may behold his glory.' Now there is a greater difference and distance between the real substance of any thing, and the most perfect image of it, than there is between the most perfect image, and the lowest shadow of the same thing. If then they longed to be freed from their state of types and shadows, to enjoy the representation of the glory of Christ in that image of it, which is given us in the gospel; much more ought we to breathe and pant after our deliverance from beholding it in the image of it, that we may enjoy the substance itself. For whatever can be manifest of Christ on this side heaven, it is granted unto us for this end, that we may the more fervently desire to be present with him.

And as it was their wisdom and their grace to rejoice in the light they had, and in those typical administrations of divine worship which shadowed out the glory of Christ unto them; yet did always pant after that more excellent light and full discovery of it, which was to be made by the gospel; so it will be ours also, thankfully to use and improve the revelations which we enjoy of it, and those institutions of worship, wherein our faith is assisted in the view thereof; yet so as continually to breathe after that perfect, that glorifying sight of it, which is reserved for heaven above.

And may we not a little examine ourselves by these things? Do we esteem this pressing towards the perfect view of the glory of Christ to be our duty, and do we abide in the performance of it? If it be otherwise with any of us, it is a signal evidence that our profession is hypocritical. If Christ be in us, he is the hope of glory in us; and where that hope is, it will be active in desires of the things hoped for. Many love the world too well, and have their minds too much filled with the things of it, to entertain desires of speeding through it unto a state wherein they may behold the glory of Christ. They are at home, and are unwilling to be absent from the body, though to be present with the Lord. They hope it may be that such a season will come at one time or another, and then it will be the best they can look for when they can be here no more. But they have but a little sight of the glory of Christ in this world by faith, if any at all, who so little, so faintly desire to have the immediate sight of it above. I cannot understand how any man can walk with God as he ought, or hath that love for Jesus Christ which true faith will produce, or doth place his refreshments and joy in spiritual things, in things above, that doth not on all just occasions, so meditate on the glory of Christ in heaven as to long for an admittance into the immediate sight of it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ alone perfectly understood wherein the eternal blessedness of them that believe in him, doth consist. And this is the sum of what he prays for with respect unto that end; namely, that we may be where he is to behold his glory. And is it not our duty to live in a continual desire of that which he prayed so earnestly that we might attain? If in ourselves, we as yet apprehend but little of the glory, the excellency, the blessedness of it, yet ought we to repose that confidence in the wisdom and love of Christ, that it is our best, infinitely better than any thing we can enjoy here below.

Unto those who are inured unto those contemplations, they are the salt of their lives, whereby every thing is condited and made savoury unto them, as we shall shew afterward. And the want of spiritual diligence herein, is that which hath brought forth a negligent, careless, wordy profession of religion, which countenancing itself with some

outward duties, hath lost out of it the power of faith and love in their principal operations. Hereby many deceive their own souls. Goods, lands, possessions, relations, trades, with secular interests in them, are the things whose image is drawn on their minds, and whose characters are written on their foreheads as the titles whereby they may be known. As believers beholding the glory of Christ in the blessed glass of the gospel, are changed into the same image and likeness by the Spirit of the Lord; so these persons beholding the beauty of the world, and the things that are in it, in the cursed glass of self-love, they are in their minds changed into the same image. Hence perplexing fears, vain hopes, empty embraces of perishing things, fruitless desires, earthly, carnal designs, cursed, self-pleasing imaginations, feeding on, and being fed by, the love of the world and self, do abide and prevail in them. But we have not so learned Christ Jesus.

CHAP. XIII.

The second difference between our beholding the glory of Christ by faith in this world, and by sight in heaven.

Faith is the light wherein we behold the glory of Christ in this world. And this in its own nature, as unto this great end, is weak and imperfect, like weak eyes, that cannot behold the sun in its beauty. Hence our sight of it differs greatly from what we shall enjoy in glory, as hath been declared. But this is not all; it is frequently hindered and interrupted in its operations, or it loseth the view of its object by one means or other. As he who sees any thing at a great distance, sees it imperfectly; and the least interposition or motion takes it quite out of his sight. So is it with our faith in this matter; whence sometimes we can have little, sometimes no sight at all of the glory of Christ by it. And this gives us, as we shall see, another difference between faith and sight.

Now, although the consideration hereof may seem a kind of diversion from our present argument, yet I choose to in-

sist upon it, that I may evidence the reasons whence it is that many have so little experience of the things whereof we have treated; that they find so little of reality or power in the exercise of this grace, or the performance of this duty. For it will appear in the issue, that the whole defect is in themselves; the truth itself insisted on is great and efficacious.

1. Whilst we are in this life, the Lord Christ is pleased in his sovereign wisdom sometimes to withdraw, and, as it were, to hide himself from us. Then do our minds fall into clouds and darkness; faith is at a loss; we cannot behold his glory; yea, we may seek him, but cannot find him. So Job complains, as we observed before; 'Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him;' chap. xxiii. 8, 9. Which way soever I turn myself, whatever are my endeavours, in what way or work of his own, I seek him, I cannot find him, I cannot see him, I cannot behold his glory. So the church also complains, 'Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour;' Isa. xlv. 15. And the psalmist, 'How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself for ever?' Psal. lxxxix. 46. This hiding of the face of God, is the hiding of the shining of his glory in the face of Christ Jesus, and therefore of the glory of Christ himself; for it is the glory of Christ to be the representative of the glory of God. The spouse in the Canticles is often at a loss, and herein bemoans herself that her beloved was withdrawn, that she could neither find him, nor see him, chap. iii. 1, 2. v. 6.

Men may retain their notions concerning Christ, his person, and his glory. These cannot be blotted out of their minds, but by heresy or obdurate stupidity. They may have the same doctrinal knowledge of him with others; but the sight of his glory doth not consist therein; they may abide in the outward performance of duties towards him, as formerly; but yet all this while as unto the especial gracious communications of himself unto their souls, and as unto a cheerful refreshing view of his glory, he may withdraw and hide himself from them.

As under the same outward dispensations of the word,

he doth manifest himself unto some, and not unto others; ('How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?' John xiv. 22.) whereon they to whom he doth so manifest himself, do see him to be beautiful, glorious, and lovely (for 'unto them that believe, he is precious'); whilst the others see nothing hereof, but wonder at them, by whom he is admired; Cant. v. 9. so in the same dispensation of the word, he sometimes hides his face, turns away the light of his countenance, clouds the beams of his glory unto some, whilst others are cherished and warmed with them.

Two things we must here speak unto.

1. Why doth the Lord Christ at any time thus hide himself in his glory from the faith of believers, that they cannot behold him?

2. How we may perceive and know that he doth so withdraw himself from us, so that, however we may please ourselves, we do not indeed behold his glory.

As unto the first of these, though what he doth is supposed an act of sovereign unaccountable wisdom; yet there are many holy ends of it, and consequently reasons for it. I shall mention one only. He doth it to stir us up in an eminent manner unto a diligent search and inquiry after him. Woful sloth and negligence are apt to prevail in us, in our meditations on heavenly things. Though our hearts wake (as the spouse speaks, Cant. v. 2.) in a valuation of Christ, his love, and his grace; yet we sleep, as unto the due exercise of faith and love towards him. Who is it that can justify himself herein? that can say, 'My heart is pure, I am clean from this sin?' Yea, it is so far otherwise with many of us, that he is for ever to be admired in his patience, that on the account of our unkindness and woful negligence herein, he hath not only withdrawn himself at seasons, but that he hath not utterly departed from us. Now he knows that those with whom he hath been graciously present, who have had views of his glory, although they have not valued the mercy and privilege of it as they ought; yet can they not bear a sense of his absence, and his hiding himself from them. By this therefore will he awake them unto a diligent inquiry after him. Upon the discovery of his absence and such a distance of his glory from them as their faith cannot

reach unto it, they become like the doves of the valleys, all of them mourning every one for his iniquity, and do stir up themselves to seek him early and with diligence. See Hos. v. 5. So wherever the spouse intimates this withdrawing of Christ from her, she immediately gives an account of her restless diligence and endeavours in her inquiries after him, until she have found him, chap. iii. 1—5. v. 2—8. And in these inquiries there is such an exercise of faith and love, though it may be acting themselves mostly in sighs and groans, as is acceptable and well pleasing to him.

We are like him in the parable of the prophet that spake unto Ahab, who having one committed unto him to keep, affirms that whilst he was busy here and there, he was gone. Christ commits himself unto us, and we ought carefully to keep his presence. 'I held him,' saith the church, 'and would not let him go;' Cant. iii. 4. But whilst we are busy here and there, while our minds are over filled with other things, he withdraws himself, we cannot find him. But even this rebuke is a sanctified ordinance for our recovery, and his return unto us.

2. Our second inquiry is, how we may know when Christ doth so withdraw himself from us, that we do not, that we cannot, behold his glory.

I speak herein unto them alone who make the observation of the lively actings of faith and love in and towards Jesus Christ their chiefest concern in all their retirements, yea in their whole walk before God. Concerning these, our inquiry is, how they may know when Christ doth in any degree or measure withdraw from them so as that they cannot in a due manner behold his glory.

1. And the first discovery hereof is by the consequents of such withdrawings. And what are the consequents of it, we can know no otherwise but by the effects of his presence with us, and the manifestation of himself unto us, which as unto some degrees must necessarily cease thereon.

Now the first of these is the life, vigour, and effectual acting of all grace in us. This is an inseparable consequent and effect of a view of his glory. Whilst we enjoy it, 'we live; nevertheless not we, but Christ liveth in us,' exciting and acting all his graces in us.

This is that which the apostle instructeth us in; while

'we behold his glory, as in a glass, as we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory;' 2 Cor. iii. 18. That is, whilst by faith we contemplate on the glory of Christ as revealed in the gospel, all grace will thrive and flourish in us towards a perfect conformity unto him. For whilst we abide in this view and contemplation, our souls will be preserved in holy frames, and in a continual exercise of love and delight, with all other spiritual affections towards him. It is impossible whilst Christ is in the eye of our faith as proposed in the gospel, but that we shall labour to be like him and greatly love him. Neither is there any way for us to attain unto either of these which are the great concernments of our souls, namely, to be like unto Christ and to love him, but by a constant view of him and his glory by faith, which powerfully and effectually works them in us. All the doctrinal knowledge which we have of him is useless; all the view we have of his glory is but fancy, imagination, or superstition, which are not accompanied with this transforming power. And that which is wrought by it, is the increase and vigour of all grace; for therein alone our conformity unto him doth consist. Growth in grace, holiness, and obedience, is a growing like unto Christ, and nothing else is so.

I cannot refrain here from a necessary short digression. This transforming efficacy from a spiritual view of Christ as proposed in the gospel, being lost as unto an experience of it in the minds of men carnal and ignorant of the mystery of believing (as it is at present by many derided, though it be the life of religion), fancy and superstition provided various supplies in the room of it. For they found out crucifixes and images, with paintings to represent him in his sufferings and glory. By these things, their carnal affections being excited by their outward senses, they suppose themselves to be affected with him, and to be like unto him. Yea, some have proceeded so far, as either by arts diabolical, or by other means, to make an appearance of wounds on their hands, and feet, and sides, therein pretending to be like him; yea, to be wholly transformed into his image. But that which is produced by an image, is but an image. An imaginary Christ will effect nothing in the minds of men, but imaginary grace.

Thus religion was lost and died. When men could not

obtain any experience in their minds of the spiritual mysteries of the gospel, nor be sensible of any spiritual change or advantage by them, they substituted some outward duties and observances in their stead; as I shall shew, God willing, elsewhere more at large. These produced some kind of effects on their minds and affections, but quite of another nature than those which are the real effects of true evangelical grace. This is openly evident in this substitution of images instead of the representation of Christ and his glory made in the gospel.

However, there is a general supposition granted on all hands; namely, that there must be a view of Christ, and his glory, to cause us to love him, and thereby to make us conformable or like unto him. But here lies the difference; those of the church of Rome say that this must be done by the beholding of crucifixes, with other images and pictures of him; and that with our bodily eyes. We say it is by our beholding his glory by faith, as revealed in the gospel, and no otherwise. And to confess the truth, we have some, who, as they reject the use of images, so they despise that spiritual view of the glory of Christ which we inquire after. Such persons on the first occasion will fall on the other side; for any thing is better than nothing.

But as we have a sure word of prophecy to secure us from these abominations by an express prohibition of such images unto all ends whatever; so unto our stability in the profession of the truth, an experience of the efficacy of this spiritual view of Christ transforming our souls into his own likeness, is absolutely necessary. For if an idolater should plead, as they do all, that in the beholding of the image of Christ, or of a crucifix, especially if they are sedulous and constant therein, they find their affections unto him greatly excited, increased, and inflamed; (as they will be, Isa. lvii. 5.) and that hereon he endeavours to be like unto him, what shall we have to oppose thereunto? For it is certain that such images are apt to make impressions on the minds of men; partly from the readiness of the senses and imagination to give them admittance into their thoughts; and partly from their natural inclinations unto superstition, their aversation from things spiritual and invisible, with an incli-

nation unto things present and visible. Hence among them who are satisfied that they ought not to be adored with any religious veneration, yet some are apt upon the sight of them to entertain a thoughtful reverence, as they would do if they were to enter into a Pagan temple full of idols; and others are continually making approaches towards their use and veneration in paintings, and altars, and such outward postures of worship as are used in the religious service of them. But that they do sensibly affect the minds of men carnal and superstitious, cannot be denied, and as they suppose, it is with a love unto Christ himself. However, certain it is in general, and confessed on all hands, that the beholding of Christ is the most blessed means of exciting all our graces, spiritualizing all our affections, and transforming our minds into his likeness. And if we have not another, and that a more excellent way of beholding him, than they have who behold him, as they suppose, in images and crucifixes, they would seem to have the advantage of us: for their minds will really be affected with somewhat, ours with nothing at all. And by the pretence thereof, they inveigle the carnal affections of men ignorant of the power of the gospel, to become their proselytes. For having lived, it may be, a long time without any the least experience of a sensible impression on their minds, or a transforming power from the representation of Christ in the gospel, upon their very first religious, devout application unto these images, they find their thoughts exercised, their minds affected, and some present change made upon them.

But there was a difference between the person of David, and an image with a bolster of goat's hair, though the one were laid in the room and place of the other. And there is so between Christ and an image, though the one be put into the place of the other. Neither do these things serve unto any other end, but to divert the minds of men from faith and love to Christ; giving them some such satisfactions in the room of them, as that their carnal affections do cleave unto their idols. And indeed it doth belong unto the wisdom of faith, or we stand in need of spiritual light, to discern and judge between the working of natural affections towards spiritual objects, on undue motives, by undue means, with

indirect ends, wherein all papal devotion consists, and the spiritual exercise of grace in those affections duly fixed on spiritual objects.

But as was said, it is a real experience of the efficacy that there is in the spiritual beholding of the glory of Christ by faith as proposed in the gospel, to strengthen, increase, and excite all grace unto its proper exercise, so changing and transforming the soul gradually into his likeness, which must secure us against all those pretences; and so I return from this digression.

Hereby we may understand whether the Lord Christ doth so withdraw himself, as that we do not, as that we cannot, behold the glory by faith in a due manner; which is the thing inquired after. For if we grow weak in our graces, unspiritual in our frames, cold in our affections, or negligent in the exercise of them by holy meditation, it is evident that he is at a great distance from us, so as that we do not behold his glory as we ought. If the weather grow cold, herbs and plants do wither, and the frost begins to bind up the earth, all men grant that the sun is withdrawn, and makes not his wonted approach unto us. And if it be so with our hearts, that they grow cold, frozen, withering, lifeless in and unto spiritual duties, it is certain that the Lord Christ is in some sense withdrawn, and that we do not behold his glory. We retain notions of truth concerning his person, office, and grace; but faith is not in constant exercise, as to real views of him and his glory. For there is nothing more certain in Christian experience than this is, that while we do really by faith behold the glory of Christ, as proposed in the gospel, the glory of his person and office as before described, and so abide in holy thoughts and meditations thereof, especially in our private duties and retirements, all grace will live and thrive in us in some measure, especially love unto his person, and therein unto all that belongs unto him. Let us but put it to the trial, and we shall infallibly find the promised event.

Do any of us find decays in grace prevailing in us; deadness, coldness, lukewarmness, a kind of spiritual stupidity and senselessness coming upon us? Do we find an unreadiness unto the exercise of grace in its proper season, and the vigorous acting of it in duties of communion with God?

And would we have our souls recovered from these dangerous diseases? Let us assure ourselves there is no better way for our healing and deliverance, yea, no other way but this alone, namely, the obtaining a fresh view of the glory of Christ by faith, and a steady abiding therein. Constant contemplation of Christ and his glory putting forth its transforming power unto the revival of all grace, is the only relief in this case, as shall further be shewed afterward.

Some will say, that this must be effected by fresh supplies and renewed communications of the Holy Spirit. Unless he fall as dew and showers on our dry and barren hearts, unless he causeth our graces to spring, thrive, and bring forth fruit, unless he revive and increase faith, love, and holiness in our souls, our backslidings will not be healed, nor our spiritual state be recovered. Unto this end is he prayed for, and promised in the Scripture; see Cant. iv. 16. Isa. xliv. 3, 4. Ezek. xi. 19. xxxvi. 26. Hos. xiv. 5, 6. And so it is. The immediate efficiency of the revival of our souls is from and by the Holy Spirit. But the inquiry is, in what way, or by what means, we may obtain the supplies and communications of him unto this end? This the apostle declares in the place insisted on; 'We, beholding the glory of Christ in a glass, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord.' It is in the exercise of faith on Christ in the way before described, that the Holy Spirit puts forth his renewing, transforming power in and upon our souls. This therefore is that alone which will retrieve Christians from their present decays and deadness.

Some complain greatly of their state and condition; none so dead, so dull, and stupid as they: they know not whether they have any spark of heavenly life left in them. Some make weak and faint endeavours for a recovery, which are like the attempts of a man in a dream, wherein he seems to use great endeavours without any success. Some put themselves unto multiplied duties. Howbeit the generality of professors seem to be in a pining thriftless condition. And the reason of it is, because they will not sincerely and constantly make use of the only remedy and relief; like a man that will rather choose to pine away in his sickness, with some useless, transient refreshments, than apply himself

unto a known and approved remedy, because it may be the use of it is unsuited unto some of his present occasions. Now this is to live in the exercise of faith in Christ Jesus. This himself assures us of, John xv. 4, 5. 'Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.'

There is a twofold coming unto Christ by believing. The first is that we may have life; that is, a spring and principle of spiritual life communicated unto us from him: 'for he is our life;' Col. iii. 3. and 'because he liveth, we live also;' John xiv. 19. Yea, it is not so much 'we that live, as he liveth in us;' Gal. ii. 19, 20. And unbelief is a not coming unto him, that we may have life; John v. 40. But secondly, there is also a coming unto him by believers in the actual exercise of faith, that they may 'have this life more abundantly;' John x. 10. That is, such supplies of grace as may keep their souls in a healthy, vigorous acting of all the powers of spiritual life. And as he reproacheth some that they would not come unto him that they might have life, so he may justly reprove us all, that we do not so come unto him in the actual exercise of faith, as that we might have this life more abundantly.

2. When the Lord Christ is near us, and we do behold his glory, he will frequently communicate spiritual refreshment in peace, consolation, and joy unto our souls. We shall not only hereby have our graces excited with respect unto him as their object, but be made sensible of his actings toward us in the communications of himself and his love unto us. When the sun of righteousness ariseth on any soul, or makes any near approach thereunto, it shall find 'healing under his wings;' his beams of grace shall convey by his Spirit, holy spiritual refreshment thereunto. For he is present with us by his Spirit, and these are his fruits and effects, as he is the Comforter, suited unto his office as he is promised unto us.

Many love to walk in a very careless unwise profession. So long as they can hold out in the performance of outward duties, they are very regardless of the greatest evangelical

privileges; of those things which are the marrow of divine promises, all real endeavours of a vital communion with Christ. Such are spiritual peace, refreshing consolations, ineffable joys, and the blessed composure of assurance. Without some taste and experience of these things, profession is heartless, lifeless, useless; and religion itself a dead carcase without an animating soul. The peace which some enjoy, is a mere stupidity. They judge not these things to be real, which are the substance of Christ's present reward; and a renunciation whereof would deprive the church of its principal supportments and encouragements in all its sufferings. It is a great evidence of the power of unbelief, when we can satisfy ourselves without an experience in our own hearts of the great things in this kind of joy, peace, consolation, assurance, that are promised in the gospel. For how can it be supposed that we do indeed believe the promises of things future, namely, of heaven, immortality, and glory, the faith whereof is the foundation of all religion, when we do not believe the promises of the present reward, in these spiritual privileges. And how shall we be thought to believe them, when we do not endeavour after an experience of the things themselves in our own souls, but are even contented without them? But herein men deceive themselves. They would very desirously have evangelical joy, peace, and assurance, to countenance them in their evil frames, and careless walking. And some have attempted to reconcile these things unto the ruin of their souls. But it will not be. Without the diligent exercise of the grace of obedience, we shall never enjoy the grace of consolation. But we must speak somewhat of these things afterward.

It is peculiarly, in the view of the glory of Christ, in his approaches unto us, and abiding with us, that we are made partakers of evangelical peace, consolation, joy, and assurance. These are a part of the royal train of his graces, of the reward wherewith he is accompanied; 'his reward is with him.' Wherever he is graciously present with any, these things are never wanting in a due measure and degree, unless it be by their own fault, or for their trial. In these things doth he give the church of his loves; Cant. vii. 12. 'For if any man,' saith he, 'loveth me, I will love him, and manifest myself unto him;' John xiv. 21. 'Yea,

I and the Father will come unto him, and make our abode with him;' ver. 23. and that so as to 'sup with him;' Rev. iii. 20. which on his part, can be only by the communication of those spiritual refreshments. The only inquiry is, by what way and means we do receive them? Now I say this is in and by our 'beholding of the glory of Christ by faith;' 1 Pet. i. 9, 10. Let that glory be rightly stated as before laid down; the glory of his person, his office, his condescension, exaltation, love, and grace; let faith be fixed in a view and contemplation of it, mix itself with it, as represented in the glass of the gospel, meditate upon it, embrace it, and virtue will proceed from Christ, communicating spiritual, supernatural refreshment and joy unto our souls. Yea, in ordinary cases it is impossible that believers should have a real prospect of this glory at any time, but that it will in some measure affect their hearts with a sense of his love, which is the spring of all consolation in them. In the exercise of faith on the discoveries of the glory of Christ made unto us in the gospel, no man shall ever totally want such intimations of his love, yea, such effusions of it in his heart, as shall be a living spring of those spiritual refreshments; John iv. 14. Rom. v. 5. When therefore we lose these things as unto a sense of them in our souls, it is evident that the Lord Christ is withdrawn, and that we do not behold his glory.

But I cannot here avoid another short digression. There are those by whom all these things are derided as distempered fancies and imaginations. Yea, such things have been spoken and written of them, as contain a virtual renunciation of the gospel, the powers of the world to come, and the whole work of the Holy Ghost as the comforter of the church. And hereby all real intercourse between the person of Christ and the souls of them that do believe, is utterly overthrown; reducing all religion to an outward shew, and a pageantry fitter for a stage, than that temple of God which is in the minds of men. According unto the sentiments of these profane scoffers, there is no such thing as the 'shedding abroad of the love of God in our hearts by the Holy Ghost;' nor as the 'witnessing of the Spirit of God with our spirits, that we are the children of God;' from which these spiritual joys and refreshments are inseparable,

as their necessary effects. No such thing, as the 'lifting up of the light of God's countenance upon us, which will put gladness into our hearts;' that gladness which compriseth all the things mentioned; no such thing as rejoicing upon 'believing with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' no such thing as Christ's shewing and manifesting himself unto us, supping with us, and giving us of his loves; that the divine promises of a 'feast of fat things, and wine well refined' in gospel mercies, are empty and insignificant words; that all those ravishing joys and exultations of spirit that multitudes of faithful martyrs of old, and in later ages have enjoyed by a view of the glory of God in Christ and a sense of his love, whereunto they gave testimony unto their last moments in the midst of their torments, were but fancies and imaginations. But it is the height of impudence in these profane scoffers, that they proclaim their own ignorance of those things which are the real powers of our religion.

Others there are, who will not deny the truth of these things. They dare not rise up in contradiction unto those express testimonies of the Scripture, wherewith they are confirmed. And they do suppose that some are partakers of them, at least there were so formerly; but as for their parts, they have no experience of them, nor do judge it their duty to endeavour after it. They can make a shift to live on hopes of heaven and future glory: as unto what is present they desire no more, but to be found in the performance of some duties in answer unto their convictions, which gives them that sorry peace which they do enjoy. So do many countenance themselves in their spiritual sloth and unbelief, keeping themselves at liberty to seek for refreshment and satisfaction in other things, whilst those of the gospel are despised. And these things are inconsistent. While men look for their chief refreshment and satisfaction in temporal things, it is impossible they should seek after those that are spiritual in a due manner. And it must be confessed, that when we have a due regard unto spiritual, evangelical consolations and joys, it will abate and take off our affections unto, and satisfaction in, present enjoyments; Phil. iii. 8, 9.

But there is no more sacred truth than this; that where

Christ is present with believers, where he is not withdrawn for a season from them, where they live in the view of his glory by faith as it is proposed unto them in the gospel, he will give unto them, at his own seasons, such intimations of his love, such supplies of his Spirit, such holy joys and rejoicings, such repose of soul in assurance, as shall refresh their souls, fill them with joy, satisfy them with spiritual delight, and quicken them unto all acts of holy communion with himself.

Let no such dishonour be reflected on the gospel, that whereas the faith of it, and obedience unto it, are usually accompanied with outward troubles, afflictions, persecution, and reproaches, as we are foretold they should be; that it doth not by its inward consolations and divine refreshments, outbalance all those evils which we may undergo upon the account of it. So to suppose, is expressly contrary to the promise of Christ himself, who hath assured that even νῦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τουτῷ 'even now in this life,' in this world, distinct from eternal life, in the world to come, we shall receive a hundred-fold recompense for all that we can lose or suffer for his sake; Matt. x. 30. as also unto the experience of them who in all ages have 'taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, as knowing in themselves' (by the experience which they have of its first-fruits) 'that they have in heaven a better and more abiding substance;' Heb. x. 29, 30. If we come short in a participation of these things, if we are strangers unto them, the blame is to be laid on ourselves alone, as it shall be immediately declared.

Now the design of the Lord Christ in thus withdrawing himself from us, and hiding his glory from our view, being the exercise of our graces, and to stir us up unto diligence in our inquiries after him, here lieth our guidance and direction in this case. Do we find ourselves lifeless in the spiritual duties of religion? Are we strangers unto the heavenly visits of consolation and joys, those visitations of God whereby he preserves our souls? Do we seldom enjoy a sense of the 'shedding abroad of his love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost?' We have no way of recovery but this alone. To this 'strong tower' must we turn ourselves as 'prisoners of hope;' unto Christ must we look that we may be saved. It is a steady view or contemplation of his glory by

faith alone, that will bring in all these things in a lively experience into our hearts and souls.

Again, in the second place, it is from ourselves principally, if we lose the views of the glory of Christ, and the exercise of faith be obstructed therein. All our spiritual disadvantages do arise from ourselves. It is the remainder of lusts and corruptions in us, either indulged by sloth and negligence, or excited and inflamed by Satan's temptations, that do obstruct us in this duty. Whilst they are in any disorder or disturbance, it is in vain for us to expect any clear view of this glory.

That view of the glory of Christ, whereof we treat, consists in two things; namely, its especial nature, and its necessary adjunct, or effect. The first is, a spiritual perception or understanding of it as revealed in the Scriptures. For the revelation of the glory of his person, office, and grace, is the principal subject of them, and the principal object of our faith. And the other consists in multiplied thoughts about him, with actings of faith in love, trust, delight, and longing after the full enjoyment of him; 1 Pet. i. 8. If we satisfy ourselves in mere notions and speculations about the glory of Christ as doctrinally revealed unto us, we shall find no transforming power or efficacy communicated unto us thereby. But when under the conduct of that spiritual light our affections do cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, our minds are filled with the thoughts of him, and delight in him, and faith is kept up unto its constant exercise in trust and affiance on him, virtue will proceed from him to purify our hearts, increase our holiness, strengthen our graces, and to fill us sometimes 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' This is the just temperature of a state of spiritual health; namely, when our light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ doth answer the means of it which we enjoy; and when our affections unto Christ do hold proportion unto that light; and this according unto the various degrees of it; for some have more, and and some have less. Where light leaves the affections behind, it ends in formality or atheism: and where affections outrun light, they sink in the bog of superstition, doting on images and pictures, or the like. But where things go not into these excesses, it is better that our affections exceed

our light on the defect of our understandings, than that our light exceed our affections from the corruption of our wills. In both these is the exercise of faith frequently interrupted and obstructed by the remainder of corruption in us, especially if not kept constantly under the discipline of mortification, but some way indulged unto. For,

1. The steam of their disorder will cloud and darken the understanding, that it shall not be able clearly to discern any spiritual object, least of all the greatest of them. There is nothing more acknowledged, even in things natural and moral, than that the disorder of the passions and affections will blind, darken, and deceive the mind in its operations. And it is much more so in things spiritual, wherein that disorder is an immediate rebellion against its proper conducting light; that is, against the light and rule of grace.

There are three sorts of them unto whom the gospel is preached, in whom there are various obstructions of this view.

1. There is in obstinate unbelievers a darkness that is an effect of the power of Satan on their minds, in blinding of them, which makes it impossible for them to behold any thing of the glory of Christ. So the apostle declares it, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;' 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Of these we do not speak.

2. There is in all men, a corrupt natural darkness; or such a depravation of their minds by nature, as that they cannot discern this glory of Christ in a due manner. Hence 'the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not;' John i. 5. For 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' 1 Cor. ii. 14. Hence it is that although Christ be preached among us continually, yet there are very few who discern any glory or beauty in him, for which he should be desired, as the prophet complains, Isa. liii. 1, 2. But I speak not of this natural darkness in general. But even these persons have their minds filled with prejudices against the gospel, and darkened as unto the glory of Christ

according as corrupt lusts and affections are prevalent in them. See John i. 44. xii. 43. Hence is the difference that is among the common hearers of the word. For although no man can do any thing of himself for the receiving of Christ, and the beholding of his glory, without the especial aid of the grace of God, Matt. xi. 24. John vi. 44, 45. yet some may make more opposition unto believing, and lay more hinderances in their own way, than others; which is done by their lusts and corruptions.

3. There are those in whom both these evils are cured by faith, wherein 'the eyes of our understandings are enlightened' to perceive and discern spiritual things; Eph. i. 16—18. But this cure is wrought in this life but in part; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. And in this cure by a supply of a principle of saving light unto our minds, there are many degrees. For some have a clearer light than others, and thereby a more clear discerning of the mystery of the wisdom of God, and of the glory of Christ therein. But whatever be our attainments herein, that which obstructs this light, that hinders it from shining in a due manner, that obstructs and hinders faith in its view of the glory of Christ. And this is done by the remainders of corrupted nature in us, when they act in any prevalent degree. For they darken the mind, and weaken it in its spiritual operations. That is, where any corrupt and inordinate affections, as love of the world, cares about it, inclinations unto sensuality, or the like spiritual disorders do prevail, faith is weakened in its spiritual acts, especially in discerning and beholding the glory of Christ. For the mind is rendered unsteady in its inquiries after it, being continually distracted and diverted with vain thoughts and imaginations.

Persons under the power of such distempers may have the same doctrinal knowledge of the person of Christ, his office, and his grace, with other men, and the same evidence of its truth fixed on their minds; but when they endeavour a real intuition into the things themselves, all things are dark and confused unto them from the uncertainty and instability of their own minds.

This is the sum of what I do design. First, We have by faith a view of the glory of Christ. This view is weak and unsteady from the nature of faith itself, and the way of its pro-

posal unto us as in a glass, in comparison of what by sight we shall attain unto. But moreover, where corrupt lusts or inordinate affections are indulged unto, where they are not continually mortified, where any one sin hath a perplexing prevalency in the mind, faith will be so far weakened thereby, as that it can neither see nor meditate upon this glory of Christ in a due manner. This is the reason why the most are so weak and unstable in the performance of this duty; yea, are almost utterly unacquainted with it. The light of faith in the minds of men being impaired, clouded, darkened, by the prevalency of unmortified lusts, it cannot make such discoveries of this glory, as otherwise it would do. And this makes the preaching of Christ unto many so unprofitable as it is.

Secondly, In the view of the glory of Christ which we have by faith, it will fill the mind with thoughts and meditations about him, whereon the affections will cleave unto him with delight. This, as was said, is inseparable from a spiritual view of his glory in its due exercise. Every one that hath it, must and will have many thoughts concerning, and great affections to, him. See the description of these things, Phil. iii. 8. 10. It is not possible, I say, that we should behold the glory of his person, office, and grace, with a due conviction of our concernment and interest therein, but that our minds will be greatly affected with it, and be filled with contemplations about it. Where it is not so with any, it is to be feared that they 'have not heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape,' whatever they profess. A spiritual sight of Christ will assuredly produce love unto him; and if any man love him not, he never saw him, he knows him not at all. And that is no love, which doth not beget in us many thoughts of the object beloved. He, therefore, who is partaker of this grace, will think much of what Christ is in himself, of what he hath done for us, of his love and condescension, of the manifestation of all the glorious excellencies of the divine nature in him, exerted in a way of infinite wisdom and goodness for the salvation of the church. Thoughts and meditations of these things will abound in us, if we are not wanting unto the due exercise of faith; and intense, inflamed affections unto him, will ensue thereon; at least they will be active unto our own refreshing experience. And where these things are not in reality (though in some they

may be only in a mean and low degree), men do but deceive their own souls in hopes of any benefit by Christ or the gospel.

This, therefore, is the present case. Where there are prevailing sinful distempers or inordinate affections in the mind, such as those before-mentioned, as self-love, love of the world, cares and fears about it, with an excessive valuation of relations and enjoyments; they will so far cumber and perplex it with a multitude of thoughts about their own objects, as shall leave no place for sedate meditations on Christ and his glory. And where the thoughts are engaged, the affections which partly excite them, and partly are led by them, will be fixed also; Col. iii. 1, 2.

This is that which, in the most, greatly promoteth that imperfection, which is in our view of the glory of Christ, by faith in this life. According to the proportion and degree of the prevalency of affections, corrupt, earthly, selfish, or sensual, filling the heads and hearts of men with a multitude of thoughts about what they are fixed on, or inclined unto; so is faith obstructed and weakened in this work and duty.

Wherefore, whereas there is a remainder of these lusts, as to the seeds of them in us all, though more mortified in some than in others; yet having the same effects in the minds of all, according to the degree of their remainder; thence it is as from an efficacious cause of it, that our view of the glory of Christ by faith, is in many so weak, imperfect and unsteady.

Thirdly, We have interruption given unto the work of faith herein, by the temptations of Satan. His original great design, wherever the gospel is preached, is to 'blind the eyes of men, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine into them,' or irradiate their minds; 2 Cor. iv. 4. And herein he prevails unto astonishment. Let the light of the gospel in the preaching of the word be never so glorious; yet by various means and artifices, he blinds the minds of the most, that they shall not behold any thing of the glory of Christ therein. By this means he continues his rule in the children of disobedience. With respect unto the elect, God overpowers him herein. He 'shines into their hearts to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ

Jesus;' ver. 6. Yet will not Satan so give over. He will endeavour by all ways and means to trouble, discompose, and darken the mind even of them that believe, so as that they shall not be able to retain clear and distinct views of this glory. And this he doth two ways.

1. With some he employs all his engines, useth all his methods of serpentine subtilty, and casts in his fiery darts, so to disquiet, discompose, and deject them, as that they can retain no comfortable views of Christ or his glory. Hence arise fears, doubts, disputes, uncertainties, with various disconsolations. Hereon they cannot apprehend the love of Christ, nor be sensible of any interest they have therein, or any refreshing persuasions that they are accepted with him. If such things sometimes shine and beam into their minds, yet they quickly vanish and disappear. Fears that they are rejected and cast off by him, that he will not receive them here nor hereafter, do come in their place; hence are they filled with anxieties and despondencies, under which it is impossible they should have any clear view of his glory.

I know that ignorance, atheism, and obstinate security in sensual sins, do combine to despise all these things. But it is no new thing in the world, that men outwardly professing Christian religion, when they find gain in that godliness, should speak evil of the things which they know not, and corrupt themselves in what they know naturally, as brute beasts.

2. With others he deals after another manner. By various means he seduceth them into a careless security, wherein they promise peace unto themselves without any diligent search into these things. Hereon they live in a general presumption that they shall be saved by Christ, although they know not how. This makes the apostle so earnest in pressing the duty of self-examination on all Christians, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' The rule of self-judging prescribed by him, is whether Christ be in us or no; and in us he cannot be, unless he be received by that faith wherewith we behold his glory. For by faith we

receive him, and by faith he dwelleth in our hearts; John i. 12. Eph. iii. 17.

This is the principal way of his prevailing in the world. Multitudes by his seduction live in great security under the utmost neglect of these things. Security is granted to be an evil destructive of the souls of men; but then it is supposed to consist only in impenitency for great and open sins; but to be neglective of endeavouring an experience of the power and grace of the gospel in our own souls, under a profession of religion, is no less destructive and pernicious, than impenitency in any course of sin.

These and the like obstructions unto faith in its operations being added unto its own imperfections, are another cause whence our view of the glory of Christ in this world is weak and unsteady; so that for the most part it doth but transiently affect our minds, and not so fully transform them into his likeness, as otherwise it would.

It is now time to consider, that sight which we shall have of the glory of Christ in heaven, in comparison of that which we have here below. Now this is equal, stable, always the same, without interruption or diversion. And this is evident, both in the causes or means of it, as also in our perfect deliverance from every thing that might be a hinderance in it, or an obstruction unto it.

1. We may consider the state of our minds in glory. The faculties of our souls shall then be made perfect; Heb. xii. 'The spirits of just men made perfect.' 1. Freed from all the clogs of the flesh, and all its influence upon them, and restraint of their powers in their operations. 2. Perfectly purified from all principles of instability and variety; of all inclinations unto things sensual and carnal, and all contrivances of self-preservation or advancement, being wholly transformed into the image of God, in spirituality and holiness. And to take in the state of our bodies after the resurrection; even they also, in all their powers and senses, shall be made entirely subservient unto the most spiritual actings of our minds in their highest elevation by the light of glory. Hereby shall we be enabled and fitted eternally to abide in the contemplation of the glory of Christ, with joy and satisfaction. The understanding shall be always

perfected with the vision of God, and the affections cleave inseparably to him; which is blessedness.

The very essential faculties of our souls in that way and manner of working, which by their union with our bodies they are confined unto, are not able to comprehend and abide constantly in the contemplation of this glory. So that, though our sight of it here be dim and imperfect, and the proposal of it obscure; yet from the weakness of our minds, we are forced sometimes to turn aside from what we do discern, as we do our bodily eyes from the beams of the sun, when it shines in its brightness. But in this perfect state they are able to behold and delight in this glory constantly, with eternal satisfaction.

'But as for me,' saith David, 'I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness;' Psal. xvii. 15. It is Christ alone, who is the likeness and image of God. When we awake in the other world, with our minds purified and rectified, the beholding of him shall be always satisfying unto us. There will be then no satiety, no weariness, no indispositions; but the mind being made perfect in all its faculties, powers, and operations, with respect unto its utmost end, which is the enjoyment of God, is satisfied in the beholding of him for evermore. And where there is perfect satisfaction without satiety, there is blessedness for ever. So the Holy Spirit affirms of the four living creatures in the Revelation; 'They rest not day nor night, saying, holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty;' chap. iv. 8. They are continually exercised in the admiration and praises of God in Christ, without weariness or interruption. Herein shall we be made like unto angels.

2. As our minds in their essential powers and faculties shall be enabled to comprehend and acquiesce in this glory of Christ, so the means or instrument of the beholding of it, is much more excellent than faith, and in its kind absolutely perfect, as hath in part been before declared. This is vision or sight. Here we walk by faith, there by sight. And this sight is not an external aid, like a glass helping the weakness of the visive faculty to see things afar off; but it is an internal power, or an act of the internal power of our minds, wherewith they are endowed in a glorified state. Hereby we shall be able to 'see him face to face, to see him as

he is,' in a direct comprehension of his glory; for this sight or visive power shall be given us for this very end, namely, to enable us so to do. Hereunto the whole glory of Christ is clear, perspicuous, and evident, which will give us eternal acquiescency therein. Hence shall our sight of the glory of Christ be invariable, and always the same.

2. The Lord Christ will never in any one instance, on any occasion, so much as one moment, withdraw himself from us, or eclipse the proposal and manifestation of himself unto our sight. This he doth sometimes in this life, and it is needful for us that so he should do. 'We shall be ever with the Lord,' 1 Thess. iv. 17. without end, without interruption. This is the centre of good and evil, as to the future different states of men. They shall be for ever. Eternity makes them absolutely good on the one hand, and absolutely evil on the other. To be in hell under the wrath of God, is in itself the greatest penal evil; but to be there for ever, without the intermission of misery, or determination of time, is that which renders it the greatest evil unto them who shall be in that condition. So is eternity the life of future blessedness. We shall be ever with the Lord, without limitation of time, without interruption of enjoyment.

There are no vicissitudes in the heavenly state. The new Jerusalem hath no temple in it; 'for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple thereof;' Rev. xxi. 24. There is no need of instituted means of worship, nor of ordinances of divine service; for we shall need neither increase of ace, nor excitations unto its exercise: the constant, immediate, uninterrupted enjoyment of God and the Lamb, supplieth all. And it hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The light of the sun is excellent; howbeit, it hath its seasons: after it hath shone in its brightest lustre, it gives place to the night and darkness. So is the light of the moon of great use in the night; but it hath its seasons also. Such is the light we have of the glory of God and the Lamb in this world. Sometimes it is as the light of the sun, which under the gospel is sevenfold, as the light of seven days in one, in comparison of the law; Isa. xxx. 26. sometimes as the light of the moon, which giveth relief in the night of temptations

and trials. But it is not constant; we are under a vicissitude of light and darkness, views of Christ, and a loss of him. But in heaven the perpetual presence of Christ with his saints, makes it always one noon of light and glory.

3. This vision is not in the least liable unto any weakenings from internal defects, nor any assaults from temptations, as is the sight of faith in this life. No doubts or fears, no disturbing darts or injections, shall there have any place. There shall no habit, no quality, no inclination, or disposition remain in our souls, but what shall eternally lead us unto the contemplation of the glory of Christ, with delight and complacency. Nor will there be any defect in the gracious powers of our souls, as unto a perpetual exercise of them; and as unto all other opposing enemies, we shall be in a perpetual triumph over them; 1 Cor. xv. 55—57. The mouth of iniquity shall be stopped for ever, and the voice of the self-avenger shall be heard no more.

Wherefore, the vision which we shall have in heaven of the glory of Christ, is serene, always the same, always new and indeficient, wherein nothing can disturb the mind in the most perfect operations of a blessed life. And when all the faculties of the soul can without any internal weakness or external hinderances exercise their most perfect operations on the most perfect object; therein lies all the blessedness which our nature is capable of.

Wherefore, whenever in this life we attain any comfortable refreshing view of the glory of Christ, by the exercise of faith on the revelation of it, with a sense of our interest therein, we cannot but long after, and desire to come unto, this more perfect, abiding, invariable aspect of it.

CHAP. XIV.

Other differences between our beholding the glory of Christ by faith in this world, and by sight in heaven.

Among the many other differences which might be insisted on (although the greatest of them are unto us at present absolutely incomprehensible, and so not to be inquired into), I shall name two only, and so put a close to this discourse.

1. In the view which we have here of the glory of Christ by faith, we gather things as it were one by one, in several parts and parcels out of the Scripture; and comparing them together in our minds, they become the object of our present sight, which is our spiritual comprehension of the things themselves. We have no proposal of the glory of Christ unto us by vision or illustrious appearance of his person, as Isaiah had of old, chap. vi. 1—4. or as John had in the Revelation, chap. i. 13—16. We need it not; it would be of no advantage unto us. For as unto the assurance of our faith, we have a word of prophecy more useful unto us, than a voice from heaven; 2 Pet. i. 17—19. And of those who received such visions, though of eminent use unto the church; yet as unto themselves, one of them cried out, 'Wo is me, I am undone;' and the other 'fell as dead at his feet.' We are not able in this life to bear such glorious representations of him, unto our edification.

And as we have no such external proposals of his glory unto us in visions, so neither have we any new revelations of him, by immediate inspiration. We can see nothing of it, know nothing of it, but what is proposed unto us in the Scripture, and that as it is proposed. Nor doth the Scripture itself, in any one place, make an entire proposal of the glory of Christ, with all that belongs unto it; nor is it capable of so doing; nor can there be any such representation of it, unto our capacity on this side heaven. If all the light of the heavenly luminaries had been contracted into one, it would have been destructive, not useful, to our sight; but being by divine wisdom distributed into sun, moon, and stars, each giving out his own proportion, it is suited to

declare the glory of God, and to enlighten the world. So if the whole revelation of the glory of Christ, and all that belongs unto it, had been committed into one series and contexture of words, it would have overwhelmed our minds, rather than enlightened us. Wherefore, God hath distributed the light of it through the whole firmament of the books of the Old and New Testament, whence it communicates itself, by various parts and degrees, unto the proper use of the church. In one place we have a description of his person, and the glory of it; sometimes in words plain and proper, and sometimes in great variety of allegories, conveying a heavenly sense of things unto the minds of them that do believe; in others, of his love and condescension in his office, and his glory therein. His humiliation, exaltation, and power, are in like manner in sundry places represented unto us. And as one star differeth from another in glory, so it was one way, whereby God represented the glory of Christ, in types and shadows under the Old Testament, and another wherein it is declared in the New. Illustrious testimonies unto all these things are planted up and down in the Scripture, which we may collect as choice flowers in the paradise of God, for the object of our faith and sight thereby.

So the spouse in the Canticles considered every part of the person and grace of Christ distinctly by itself, and from them all, concludes that 'he is altogether lovely;' chap. v. 10—16. So ought we to do in our study of the Scripture, to find out the revelation of the glory of Christ, which is made therein, as did the prophets of old, as unto what they themselves received by immediate inspiration. 'They searched diligently what the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should ensue;' 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. But this seeing of Christ by parts in the revelation of him, is one cause why we see him here but in part.

Some suppose that by chopping and painting, and gilding, they can make an image of Christ that shall perfectly represent him to their senses and carnal affections from head to foot. But they 'feed on ashes,' and have 'a lie in their right hand.' Jesus Christ is evidently crucified before our eyes in the Scripture; Gal. iii. 1. So also is he evidently

exalted, and glorified therein. And it is the wisdom of faith to gather into one, those parcelled descriptions that are given of him, that they may be the object of its view and contemplation.

In the vision which we shall have above, the whole glory of Christ will be at once and always represented unto us; and we shall be enabled in one act of the light of glory to comprehend it. Here indeed we are at a loss; our minds and understandings fail us in their contemplations. It will not yet enter into our hearts to conceive what is the beauty, what is the glory of this complete representation of Christ unto us. To have at once all the glory of what he is, what he was in his outward state and condition, what he did and suffered, what he is exalted unto, his love and condescension, his mystical union with the church, and the communication of himself unto it, with the recapitulation of all things in him; and the glory of God, even the Father, in his wisdom, righteousness, grace, love, goodness, power, shining forth eternally in him, in what he is, hath done, and doth, all presented unto us in one view, all comprehended by us at once, is that which at present we cannot conceive. We can long for it, pant after it, and have some foretastes of it; namely, of that state and season, wherein our whole souls in all their powers and faculties, shall constantly, inseparably, eternally cleave by love unto whole Christ in the sight of the glory of his person and grace, until they are watered, dissolved, and inebriated in the waters of life, and the rivers of pleasure that are above for evermore. So must we speak of the things which we admire, which we adore, which we love, which we long for, which we have some foretastes of in sweetness ineffable, which yet we cannot comprehend.

These are some few of those things whence ariseth the difference between that view which we have here of the glory of Christ, and that which is reserved for heaven; namely, such as are taken from the difference between the means or instruments of the one and the other, faith and sight.

In the last place, the great difference between them, consists in, and is manifested by, their effects. Hereof I shall give some few instances, and close this discourse.

First, The vision which we shall have of the glory of Christ in heaven, and of the glory of the immense God in him, is perfectly and absolutely transforming. It doth change us wholly into the image of Christ. When we shall see him, we shall be as he is; we shall be like him, because we shall see him; 1 John iii. 2. But although the closing, perfecting act of this transformation be an act of sight, or the sight of glory; yet there are many things towards it, or degrees in it, which we may here take notice of in our way.

1. The soul upon its departure from the body, is immediately freed from all the weakness, disability, darkness, uncertainties and fears, which were impressed on it from the flesh; wherewith it was in the strictest union. The image of the first Adam as fallen, is then abolished. Yea, it is not only freed from all irregular sinful distempers cleaving to our nature as corrupted, but from all those sinless grievances and infirmities which belong unto the original constitution of it. This necessarily ensues on the dissolution of the person in order unto a blessed state. The first entrance by mortality into immortality, is a step towards glory. The ease which a blessed soul finds in a deliverance from this encumbrance, is a door of entrance into eternal rest. Such a change is made in that, which in itself is the centre of all evil, namely death, that it is made a means of freeing us from all the remainders of what is evil.

For this doth not follow absolutely on the nature of the thing itself. A mere dissolution of our natures can bring no advantage with it, especially as it is a part of the curse. But it is from the sanctification of it by the death of Christ. Hereby that which was God's ordinance for the infliction of judgment, becomes an effectual means for the communication of mercy; 1 Cor. v. 22. xv. 54. It is by virtue of the death of Christ alone, that the souls of believers are freed by death from all impressions of sin, infirmity, and evils, which they have had from the flesh, which were their burden, under which they groaned all their days. No man knows in any measure the excellency of this privilege, and the dawnings of glory which are in it, who hath not been wearied, and even worn out, through long conflicting with the body of death. The soul hereon being freed from all

annoyances, all impressions from the flesh, is expedite and enlarged unto the exercise of all its gracious faculties, as we shall see immediately.

With wicked men it is not so. Death unto them is a curse; and the curse is the means of the conveyance of all evil, and not deliverance from any. Wherein they have been warmed and refreshed by the influences of the flesh, they shall be deprived of it. But their souls in their separate state, are perpetually harassed with all the disquieting passions which have been impressed on their minds by their corrupt fleshly lusts. In vain do such persons look for relief by death. If there be any thing remaining of present good and usefulness to them, they shall be deprived of it. And their freedom for a season from bodily pains, will no way lie in the balance against that confluence of evils which death will let in upon them.

2. The spirits of just men being freed by death from the clog of the flesh, not yet refined; all the faculties of their souls, and all the graces in them, as faith, love, and delight, are immediately set at liberty, enabled constantly to exercise themselves on God in Christ. The end for which they were created, for which our nature was endowed with them, was, that we might adhere unto God by them, and come unto the enjoyment of him. Being now freed wholly from all that impotency, perverseness, and disability, unto this end, with all the effects of them, which came upon them by the fall; they are carried with a full stream towards God, cleaving unto him with the most intense embraces. And all their actings towards God shall be natural, with facility, joy, delight, and complacency. We know not yet the excellency of the operations of our souls in divine things, when disburdened of their present weight of the flesh. And this is a second step towards the consummation of glory. For

In the resurrection of the body upon its full redemption, it shall be so purified, sanctified, glorified, as to give no obstruction unto the soul in its operations, but be a blessed organ for its highest and most spiritual actings. The body shall never more be a trouble, a burden unto the soul, but an assistant in its operations, and participant of its blessedness. Our eyes were made to see our Redeemer, and our

other senses to receive impressions from him, according unto their capacity. As the bodies of wicked men shall be restored unto them to increase and complete their misery in their sufferings; so shall the bodies of the just be restored unto them, to heighten and consummate their blessedness.

3. These things are preparatory unto glory. The complete communication of it, is by the infusion of a new heavenly light into the mind, enabling us to see the Lord Christ as he is. The soul shall not be brought into the immediate presence of Christ without a new power to behold him, and the immediate representation of his glory. Faith now doth cease as unto the manner of its operation in this life, whilst we are absent from Christ. This light of glory succeeds into its room, fitted for that state and all the ends of it, as faith is for that which is present. And,

4. In the first operation of this light of glory, believers shall so behold the glory of Christ, and the glory of God in him, as that therewith, and thereby, they shall be immediately and universally changed into his likeness. They shall be as he is, when they shall see him as he is. There is no growth in glory, as unto parts; there may be as unto degrees. Additions may be outwardly made unto what is at first received as by the resurrection of the body; but the internal light of glory, and its transforming efficacy is capable of no degrees; though new revelations may be made unto it, unto eternity. For the infinite fountain of life, and light, and goodness, can never be fathomed, much less exhausted. And what God spake on the entrance of sin, by the way of contempt and reproach, 'Behold the man is become like one of us,' upbraiding him with what he had foolishly designed; on the accomplishment of the work of his grace, he says in love and infinite goodness, 'Man is become like one of us,' in the perfect restoration of our image in him. This is the first effect of the light of glory.

Faith also in beholding the glory of Christ in this life, is accompanied with a transforming efficacy, as the apostle expressly declares, 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is the principle from whence, and the instrumental cause whereby, all spiritual change is wrought in us in this life; but the work of it is imperfect; first, because it is gradual, and then because it is partial.

1. As unto the manner of its operation, it is gradual, and doth not at once transform us into the image of Christ. Yea, the degrees of its progress therein, are unto us for the most part imperceptible. It requires much spiritual wisdom and observation to obtain an experience of them in our own souls. 'The inward man is renewed day by day,' whilst we behold these invisible things; 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. But how? Even as the outward man decays by age, which is by insensible degrees and alterations. Such is the transformation which we have by faith in its present view of the glory of Christ. And according to our experience of its efficacy herein, is our evidence of its truth and reality in the beholding of him. No man can have the least ground of assurance that he hath seen Christ and his glory by faith, without some effects of it in changing him into his likeness. For as on the touch of his garment by the woman in the gospel, virtue went out from him to heal her infirmity; so upon this view of faith, an influence of transforming power will proceed from Christ unto the soul.

2. As unto the event it is but partial. It doth not bring this work unto perfection. The change wrought by it is indeed great and glorious; or, as the apostle speaks, it is 'from glory to glory,' in a progress of glorious grace: but absolute perfection is reserved for vision. As unto divine worship, perfection was not by the law. It did many things preparatory unto the revelation of the will of God concerning it; but it 'made nothing perfect:' so absolute perfection in holiness, and the restoration of the image of God, is not by the gospel, is not by faith; however it gives us many preparatory degrees unto it, as the apostle fully declares, Phil. iii. 10—14.

Secondly, Vision is beatifical, as it is commonly called, and that not amiss. It gives perfect rest and blessedness unto them in whom it is. This may be a little opened in the ensuing observations.

1. There are continual operations of God in Christ, in the souls of them that are glorified, and communications from him unto them. For all creatures must eternally live, even in heaven, in dependance on him who is the eternal fountain of being, life, goodness, and blessedness unto all. As we cannot subsist one moment in our beings, lives, souls,

bodies, the inward or outward man, without the continual actings of divine power in us, and towards us; so in the glorified state our all shall depend eternally on divine power and goodness, communicating themselves unto us, for all the ends of our blessed subsistence in heaven.

2. What is the way and manner of these communications, we cannot comprehend. We cannot indeed fully understand the nature and way of his spiritual communications unto us in this life. We know these things by their signs, their outward means, and principally by the effects they produce in the real change of our natures. But in themselves we see but little of them. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but we know not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit;' John iii. 8. All God's real operations in heaven and earth are incomprehensible, as being acts of infinite power, and we cannot search them out unto perfection.

3. All communications from the Divine Being and infinite fulness in heaven unto glorified saints, are in and through Christ Jesus, who shall for ever be the medium of communication between God and the church, even in glory. All things being gathered into one head in him, even things in heaven, and things in earth; that head being in immediate dependance on God, this order shall never be dissolved, Eph. i. 10, 11. 1 Cor. iii. 23. And on these communications from God through Christ depends entirely our continuance in a state of blessedness and glory. We shall no more be self-subsistent in glory, than we are in nature or grace.

4. The way on our part whereby we shall receive these communications from God by Christ, which are the eternal springs of life, peace, joy, and blessedness, is this vision, the sight whereof we speak. For as it is expressly assigned thereunto in the Scripture; so whereas it contains the perfect operation of our minds and souls in a perfect state, on the most perfect object, it is the only means of our blessedness. And this is the true cause whence there neither is, nor can be, any satiety or weariness in heaven, in the eternal contemplation of the same glory. For not only the object of our sight is absolutely infinite, which can never be

searched into the bottom; yea, is perpetually new unto a finite understanding; so our subjective blessedness consisting in continual fresh communications from the infinite fulness of the divine nature, derived unto us through vision, is always new, and always will be so to eternity. Herein shall all the saints of God drink of the rivers of pleasure that are at his right hand, be satisfied with his likeness, and refresh themselves in the eternal springs of life, light, and joy, for evermore.

This effect that view which we have by faith of the glory of Christ in this world, doth not produce. It is sanctifying, not glorifying. The best of saints are far from a perfect or glorified state in this life. And that not only on the account of the outward evils, which in their persons they are exposed unto; but also of the weakness and imperfection of their inward state in grace. Yet we may observe some things unto the honour of faith in them who have received it. As,

1. In its due exercise on Christ, it will give unto the souls of believers some previous participation of future glory, working in them dispositions unto, and preparation for, the enjoyment of it.

2. There is no glory, no peace, no joy, no satisfaction in this world, to be compared with what we receive by that weak and imperfect view which we have of the glory of Christ by faith. Yea, all the joys of the world are a thing of nought in comparison of what we so receive.

3. It is sufficient to give us such a perception, such a foretaste of future blessedness in the enjoyment of Christ, as may continually stir us up to breathe and pant after it. But it is not beatifical.

Other differences of an alike nature between our beholding of the glory of Christ in this life by faith, and that vision of it, which is reserved for heaven, might be insisted on; but I shall proceed no farther. There is nothing farther for us to do herein but that now and always we shut up all our meditations concerning it, with the deepest self-abasement, out of a sense of our unworthiness and insufficiency to comprehend those things, admiration of that excellent glory which we cannot comprehend, and vehement longings for that season when we shall see him as he is, be ever with him, and know him, even as we are known.

MEDITATIONS AND DISCOURSES

CONCERNING

THE GLORY OF CHRIST,

APPLIED UNTO

UNCONVERTED SINNERS,

AND

SAINTS UNDER SPIRITUAL DECAYS:

IN TWO CHAPTERS, FROM JOHN XVII. 24.

TO THE READER.

THE design of this Preface is not to commend either the Author or the matter contained in this little book. Let every reader do as he finds cause. Nor need any assurance be given that Dr. Owen was the Author, to any who have conversed with his writings, and will be at the pains to read this over. It is indeed his application of the former discourses upon this subject, printed in the year 1684. But the reason why it was not then added (the omission whereof rendered that book imperfect to judicious readers) seems necessary to be given. Had it pleased God he had lived a little longer, it would have come out as perfect as his other works. But there being no more transcribed in his life-time than what was then printed, and that published soon after his death; these two chapters wrote only with his own hand, were found too late to be then added. They are therefore now printed to complete those discourses. And it is presumed, that as no serious Christian who reads this, will be satisfied without the other also; so all who prize the former, will be glad of the opportunity to add this thereunto.

MEDITATIONS AND DISCOURSES

CONCERNING

THE GLORY OF CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

Application of the foregoing meditations concerning the glory of Christ. First in an exhortation unto such as are not yet partakers of him.

THAT which remains, is to make some application of the glorious truth insisted on unto the souls of them that are concerned; and what I have to offer unto that end, I shall distribute under two heads. The first shall be with respect unto them who are yet strangers from this holy and glorious one, who are not yet made partakers of him, nor have any especial interest in him. And the second shall be directed unto believers, as a guide and assistance unto their recovery from spiritual decays, and the revival of a spring of vigorous grace, holiness, and obedience in them.

For the first of these, although it seems not directly to lie in our way, yet is it suited unto the method of the gospel, that wherever there is a declaration of the excellencies of Christ, in his person, grace, or office, it should be accompanied with an invitation and exhortation unto sinners to come unto him. This method he himself first made use of, Matt. xi. 27—30. John vii. 37, 38. and consecrated it unto our use also. Besides, it is necessary from the nature of the things themselves, for who can dwell on the consideration of the glory of Christ, being called therewith to the declaration of it, but his own mind will engage him to invite lost sinners unto a participation of him. But I shall at present proceed no farther in this exhortation, but only unto the proposal of some of those considerations which may prepare, incline, and dispose their minds unto a closure with him as he is tendered in the gospel. As,

1. Let them consider well what is their present state

with respect unto God and eternity. This Moses wisheth for the Israelites; Deut. xxxii. 29. 'Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.' It is the greatest folly in the world to leave the issues of these things unto an uncertain hazard; and that man who cannot prevail with himself strictly to examine what is his state and condition with respect unto eternity, doth never do any good, nor abstain from any evil in a due manner. Remember, therefore, that 'many are called, but few are chosen.' To be called, is to enjoy all the outward privileges of the gospel, which is all you unto whom I speak can pretend unto, yet this you may do and not be chosen; even among those unto whom the word is preached, they are but few that shall be saved. In the distribution made by our Lord Jesus Christ of the hearers of the word into four sorts of ground, it was but one of them that received real benefit thereby; and if our congregations are no better than were his hearers, there is not above a fourth part of them that will be saved; it may be a far less number: and is it not strange that every one of them is not jealous over himself and his own condition? Many herein deceive themselves, until they fall under woful surprisals. And this is represented in the account of the final judgment; for the generality of those who have professed the gospel are introduced as complaining of their disappointments; Matt. xxv. 41—43. For what is there spoken, is only a declaration of what befell them here in the close of their lives, and their personal judgment thereon.

2. Take heed of being deluded by common presumptions. Most men have some thoughts in general about what their state is, and what it will be in the issue; but they make no diligent search into this matter, because a number of common presumptions do immediately insinuate themselves into their minds for their relief; and they are such, as all whose force and efficacy unto this end lies in this, that they differ from others, and are better than they; as that they are Christians, that they are in the right way of religion, that they are partakers of the outward privileges of the gospel, hearing the word, and participation of the sacraments; that they have light and convictions, so as that they abstain from sin, and perform duties so as others do

not, and the like. All those with whom it is not so, who are behind them in these things, they judge to be in an ill state and condition, whence they entertain good hopes concerning themselves; and this is all that most trust unto. It is not my present business to discourse the vanity of presumptions; it hath been done by many. I give only this warning in general unto those who have the least design or purpose to come to Christ, and to be made partakers of him, that they put no trust in them, that they rely not on them; for if they do so, they will eternally deceive their souls. This was a great part of the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist, Matt. iii. 9. 'Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father.' This was their great comprehensive privilege, containing all the outward church and covenant advantages. These they rested in, and trusted to, unto their ruin; herein he designed to undeceive them.

3. Consider aright what it is to live and die without an interest in Christ, without a participation of him. Where this is not stated in the mind, where thoughts of it are not continually prevalent, there can be no one step taken in the way towards him. Unless we are thoroughly convinced that without him we are in a state of apostacy from God, under the curse, obnoxious unto eternal wrath, as some of the worst of God's enemies, we shall never flee unto him for refuge in a due manner; 'The whole have no need of a physician, but the sick:' Christ 'came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;' and the conviction intended, is the principal end of the ministry of the law. The miseries of this state have been the subject of innumerable sermons and discourses; but there is a general misery in the whole, that few take themselves to be concerned therein, or apply these things unto themselves. Let us tell men of it a thousand times, yet they either take no notice of it, or believe it not, nor look on it as that which belongs unto the way and course of preaching, wherein they are not concerned. These things it seems preachers must say, and they may believe them who have a mind thereunto. It is a rare thing that any one shall as much as say unto himself, is it so with me? And if we now, together with this caution, tell the same men again, that whilst they are uninterested in Christ, not in-

grafted into him by faith, that they run in vain, that all their labour in religion is lost, that their duties are all rejected, that they are under the displeasure and curse of God, that their end is eternal destruction, which are all unquestionably certain, yet will they let all these things pass by without any farther consideration.

But here I must fix with them unto whom I speak at present, unless there be a full conviction in them of the woful deplorable condition of every soul, of whatever quality, profession, religion, outward state it be, who is not yet made partaker of Christ, all that I have farther to add will be of no signification. Remember then, that the due consideration hereof is unto you in your state, your chiefest concernment in this world: and be not afraid to take in a full and deep sense of it; for if you are really delivered from it, and have good evidence thereof, it is nothing unto you but matter of eternal praise and thanksgiving. And if you are not so, it is highly necessary that your minds should be possessed with due apprehension of it. The work of this conviction is the first effect of true religion, and the great abuse of religion in the world is, that a pretence of it deludes the minds of men to apprehend that it is not necessary; for to be of this or that religion; of this or that way in religion, is supposed sufficient to secure the eternal state of men, though they are never convinced of their lost estate by nature.

4. Hereon consider the infinite condescension and love of Christ, in his invitations and calls of you to come unto him for life, deliverance, mercy, grace, peace, and eternal salvation. Multitudes of these invitations and calls are recorded in the Scripture, and they are all of them filled up with those blessed encouragements, which divine wisdom knows to be suited unto lost, convinced sinners, in their present state and condition. It were a blessed contemplation to dwell on the consideration of the infinite condescension, grace, and love of Christ, in his invitations of sinners to come unto him, that they may be saved; of that mixture of wisdom and persuasive grace that is in them, of the force and efficacy of the pleading and argument that they are accompanied withal, as they are recorded in the Scripture; but that belongs not to my present design. This I shall only

say, that in the declaration and preaching of them, Jesus Christ yet stands before sinners, calling, inviting, encouraging of them to come unto him.

This is somewhat of the word which he now speaks unto you. Why will ye die? why will ye perish? why will you not have compassion on your own souls? Can your hearts endure, or can your hands be strong in the day of wrath that is approaching? It is but a little while before all your hopes, your reliefs, and presumptions will forsake you, and leave you eternally miserable: look unto me, and be saved; come unto me, and I will ease you of all sins, sorrows, fears, burdens, and give rest unto your souls. Come, I entreat you; lay aside all procrastinations, all delays; put me off no more; eternity lies at the door. Cast out all cursed self-deceiving reserves; do not so hate me, as that you will rather perish than accept of deliverance by me.

These and the like things doth the Lord Christ continually declare, proclaim, plead, and urge on the souls of sinners; as it is fully declared, Prov. i. 20—34. He doth it in the preaching of the word, as if he were present with you, stood amongst you, and spake personally to every one of you. And because this would not suit his present state of glory, he hath appointed the ministers of the gospel to appear before you, and to deal with you in his stead, avowing, as his own, the invitations that are given you in his name; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

Consider therefore his infinite condescension, grace, and love herein. Why all this towards you? Doth he stand in need of you? Have you deserved it at his hands? Did you love him first? Cannot he be happy and blessed without you? Hath he any design upon you, that he is so earnest in calling you unto him? Alas! it is nothing but the overflowing of mercy, compassion, and grace, that moves and acts him herein. Here lies the entrance of innumerable souls into a death and condemnation far more severe than those contained in the curse of the law; 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. In the contempt of this infinite condescension of Christ, in his holy invitation of sinners to himself, lies the sting and poison of unbelief, which unavoidably gives over the souls of men unto eternal ruin. And who shall once pity them to eternity who are guilty of it? Yea but,

5. Perhaps if you should on his invitation begin to look to him, and resolve to come to him, you are greatly afraid that when it comes to the trial he will not receive you; for no heart can conceive, no tongue can express, what wretched, vile, and provoking sinners you have been. That the Lord Christ will receive unto him such as we are, we have no hopes, or that ever we shall find acceptance with him. I say, it is not amiss when persons come so far, as to be sensible of what discouragements they have to conflict withal, what difficulties lie in their way, and what objections do arise against them, for the most do perish in a senseless stupidity; they will not consider how it is with them, what is required of them, nor how it will be in the latter end; they doubt not but that either they do believe already, or can do so when they please; but when any come so far as to charge the failure of their acceptance with Christ on their own unworthiness, and so are discouraged from coming unto him, there are arguments for their conviction and persuasion, which nothing but the devil and unbelief can defeat. Wherefore, that which is now proposed unto consideration in answer hereunto, is the readiness of Christ to receive every sinner, be he who or what he will, that shall come unto him. And hereof we have the highest evidences that divine wisdom and grace can give unto us. This is the language of the gospel, of all that the Lord Christ did or suffered, which is recorded therein. This is the divine testimony of the 'three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;' and of the 'three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood;' all give their joint testimony, that the Lord Christ is ready to receive all sinners that come to him; they who receive not this testimony, make God a liar, both Father, Son, and Spirit. Whatever the Lord Christ is in the constitution of his person, in the representation of the Father, in his office, in what he did on the earth, in what he doth in heaven, proclaims the same truth. Nothing but cursed obstinacy in sin and unbelief can suggest a thought unto our minds, that he is not willing to receive us when we come unto him. Herein we are to bear testimony against the unbelief of all unto whom the gospel is preached, that come not unto him. Unbelief acting itself herein, includes a contempt of the wisdom of God, a

denial of his truth or faithfulness, an impeachment of the sincerity of Christ in his invitations, making him a deceiver, and will issue in an express hatred of his person and office, and of the wisdom of God in him. Here then you are shut up, you cannot from hence take any countenance unto your unbelief.

6. Consider that he is as able to save us, as he is ready and willing to receive us. The testimonies which he hath given us unto his goodness and love are uncontrollable; and none dare directly to call in question, or deny his power. Generally this is taken for granted by all, that Christ is able to save us if he will; yea, who shall question his ability to save us, though we live in sin and unbelief? And many expect that he will do so, because they believe he can if he will: but indeed Christ hath no such power, no such ability; he cannot save unbelieving, impenitent sinners; for this cannot be done without denying himself, acting contrary to his word, and destroying his own glory. Let none please themselves with such vain imaginations. Christ is able to save all them, and only them, who come to God by him. Whilst you live in sin and unbelief, Christ himself cannot save you; but when it comes to the trial in particular, some are apt to think, that although they will not conclude that Christ cannot save them, yet they do, on various accounts, that they cannot be saved by him. This therefore we also give testimony unto, in our exhortation to come unto him; namely, that his power to save those that shall comply with his call is sovereign, uncontrollable, almighty, that nothing can stand in the way of. All things in heaven and earth are committed unto him; all power is his; and he will use it unto this end, namely, the assured salvation of all that come unto him.

7. Consider greatly what hath been spoken of the representation of God, and all the holy properties of his nature in him. Nothing can possibly give us more encouragement to come unto him; for we have manifested, that God who is infinitely wise and glorious, hath designed to exert all the holy properties of his nature, his mercy, love, grace, goodness, righteousness, wisdom, and power in him, in and unto the salvation of them that do believe. Whoever therefore comes unto Christ by faith on this represen-

tation of the glory of God in him, he ascribes and gives unto God all that glory and honour which he aimeth at from his creatures, and we can do nothing wherewith he is pleased equal unto it. Every poor soul that comes by faith unto Christ, gives unto God all that glory which it is his design to manifest and be exalted in, and what can we do more? There is more glory given unto God by coming unto Christ in believing, than in keeping the whole law; inasmuch as he hath more eminently manifested the holy properties of his nature in the way of salvation by Christ, than in giving of the law. There is therefore no man who under gospel invitations refuseth to come unto, and close with, Christ by believing, but secretly, through the power of darkness, blindness, and unbelief, he hates God, dislikes all his ways, would not have his glory exalted, nor manifested, choosing rather to die in enmity against him, than to give glory to him. Do not deceive yourselves, it is not an indifferent thing, whether you will come in unto Christ upon his invitations or no; a thing that you may put off from one season unto another: your present refusal of it is as high an act of enmity against God, as your nature is capable of.

8. Consider that by coming unto Christ, you shall have an interest in all that glory which we have proposed unto you; for Christ will become yours more intimately than your wives and children are yours, and so all his glory is yours also. All are apt to be affected with the good things of their relation, their grace, their riches, their beauty, their power; for they judge themselves to have an interest in them, by reason of their relation unto them. Christ is nearer to believers than any natural relations are to us whatever; they have therefore an interest in all his glory. And is this a small thing in your eyes, that Christ shall be yours, and all his glory shall be yours, and you shall have the advantage of it unto your eternal blessedness? Is it nothing unto you to continue strangers from, and uninterested in, all this glory? To be left to take your portion in this world in lusts and sins, and pleasures, and a few perishing trifles, with eternal ruin in the close, whilst such durable substance, such riches of glory are tendered unto you?

Lastly, Consider the horrible ingratitude there is in a neglect or refusal to come in to Christ upon his invitation,

with the doleful eternal ruin that will ensue thereon. 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' Impenitent unbelievers under the preaching of the gospel, are the vilest and most ungrateful of all God's creation. The devils themselves, as wicked as they are, are not guilty of this sin, for Christ is never tendered unto them; they never had an offer of salvation on faith and repentance. This is their peculiar sin, and will be the peculiar aggravation of their misery unto eternity. 'Hear, ye despisers, wonder and perish.' The sin of the devil is in malice and opposition unto knowledge, above what the nature of man is in this world. Men therefore must sin in some instance above the devil, or God would not give them their eternal portion with the devil and his angels: this is unbelief.

Some it may be will say, What then shall we do? What shall we apply ourselves unto? What is it that is required of us?

1. Take the advice of the apostle, Heb. iii. 7, 8. 13. 'To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' This day, even this, is unto you in the tender of grace the acceptable time; this is the day of salvation. Others have had this day as well as you, and have missed their opportunity; take heed lest it should be so with you also. How if any one should write it down, or peculiarly commit it to remembrance, this day there was a tender of Christ and salvation in him made unto my soul; from this time I will resolve to give up myself unto him. And if you find your resolutions, charge your consciences with what you have engaged, and make yourselves to know, that if you go back from it, it is a token that you are going to ruin.

2. Consider that it is high time for you to make somewhat of religion. Do not hang always in suspense; let it not be a question with yourselves, whether you have a mind to be saved or no. This is as good a time and season for a resolution as ever you are like to have whilst in this world. Some things, nay, many things may fall in between this and the next opportunity, that shall put you backward, and make your entrance into the kingdom of heaven far more

difficult than ever it was; and the living in that uncertainty at best, which you do, of what will become of you unto eternity, is the most miserable kind of life in the world. Those who put far from them the evil day, and live in the pursuit of lusts and pleasures, have somewhat that gives them present satisfaction, and they say not, there is no hope, because they find the life of the hand: but you have nothing that gives you any prevalent refreshment, neither will your latter end be better than theirs, if you die without an interest in Christ Jesus. Come therefore at length unto a determinate resolution what you will do in this matter. Christ hath waited long for you, and who knows how soon he may withdraw, never to look after you any more.

Upon occasion of the preceding discourse concerning the glory of Christ, I thought it necessary to add unto it this brief exhortation unto faith in him, aiming to suit it unto the capacity of the meanest sinner that is capable of any self-consideration as unto his eternal welfare. But yet a little farther, to give efficacy, unto this exhortation, it will be necessary to remove some of those common and obvious tergiversations that convinced sinners do usually betake themselves unto, to put off a present compliance with the calls of Christ to come unto him; for although it is unbelief alone acting in the darkness of men's minds and the obstinacy of their wills, that effectually keeps off sinners from coming unto Christ upon his call, yet it shrouds itself under various pretences, that it may not appear in its own ugly form; for no sin, whereof men can be guilty of in this world, is of so horrible a nature, and so dreadful an aspect as is this unbelief, where a clear view of it is obtained in evangelical light: wherefore, by the aid of Satan, it suggests other pleas and pretences unto the minds of sinners, under which they may countenance themselves in a refusal to come to Christ. See 2 Cor. iv. 4. Any thing else it shall be, but not unbelief, that they all disavow. I shall therefore speak unto a few of those tergiversations in this case which are obvious, and which are exemplified in the gospel itself.

First, Some do say on such exhortations, What is it that you would have us to do? We hear the word preached, we believe it as well as we can, we do many things willingly, and abstain from many evils diligently; what is more re-

quired of us? This is the language of the hearts of the most with whom in this case we have to do. And I say,

1. It is usual with them who do something in the ways of God, but not all they should, and so nothing in a due manner, to expostulate about requiring of them more than they do. So the people dispute with God himself, Mal. i. 6. iii. 8. 13. So they in the gospel, who esteemed themselves to have done their duty, being pressed unto faith by Christ Jesus, ask him, with some indignation, 'What shall we do, that we might work the work of God?' John vi. 28. If what we do be not enough, what is it that you require more of us? So was it with the young man, Matt. xix. 20. 'What do I lack yet?' Be advised therefore not to be too confident of your state, lest you should yet lack that one thing, the want whereof might prove your eternal ruin.

2. The things mentioned, with all of the like nature, which may be multiplied, may be where there is no one spark of saving faith. Simon Magus heard the word, and believed as well as he could; Herod heard it, and did many things gladly; and all sorts of hypocrites do upon their convictions perform many duties, and abstain from many sins, so as that, notwithstanding this plea, you may perish for ever.

3. Where these things are sincere, they belong unto the exercise of faith; they may be after a sort without faith, but faith cannot be without them. But there is a fundamental act of faith, whereby we close with Christ, whereby we receive him; that is, in order of nature, antecedent unto its actings in all other duties and occasions; it is laying the foundation; other things belong to the building. This is that you are called on to secure, and you may know it by these two properties:

1. It is singular. So our Saviour tells the Jews, John vi. 29. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' The act, work, or duty of faith in the receiving of Christ, is a peculiar singular work, wherein the soul yields especial obedience unto God; it is not to be reckoned unto such common duties as those mentioned, but the soul must find out wherein it hath in a singular manner closed with Christ upon the command of God.

2. It is accompanied with a universal spiritual change

in the whole soul. 2 Cor. v. 17. 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things, are become new:' wherefore, if you would not choose rather to deceive and ruin your own souls, come to the trial whether indeed you have received Christ in such a singular transforming act of faith: do not on such pretences want a compliance with the word of exhortation proposed unto you. But,

Secondly, Some will say, they know not how to proceed in this work. They can make nothing of it; they have tried to come to this believing, but do still fail in what they design; they go on and off, but can make no progress, can come to no satisfaction; therefore they think it best to let things go in general as they are, without putting themselves to farther trouble, as unto any especial act of faith in the receiving of Christ. This is the language of men's hearts, though not of their mouths, another shelter of unbelief, and they act accordingly; they have a secret despondency, which keeps them safe from attempting a real closure with Christ on the tender of the gospel: something may be offered unto this distempered frame of mind.

1. Remember the disciples that were fishing, and had toiled all night, but caught nothing, Luke v. 3, 4. upon the coming of Christ unto them, he requires that they should cast out their nets once more; Peter makes some excuse from the labour which they had taken in vain all night; however he would venture once more on the command of Christ, and had an astonishing draught of fishes, ver. 5—9. Have you been wearied with disappointments in your attempts and resolutions? yet cast in your net this once more upon the command of Christ, venture this once more to come unto him on his call and invitation, you know not what success he may give unto you.

2. Consider that it is not failing in this or that attempt of coming to Christ, but a giving over your endeavours that will be your ruin. The woman of Canaan, in her great outcry to Christ for mercy, Matt. xv. 22. had many a repulse: first, it is said, he answered her not a word; then his disciples desired that he would send her away, that she might not trouble him any more; whereon he gives a reason why he would not regard her, or why he could justly pass her by;

she was not an Israelitess, unto whom he was sent; yet she gives not over, but pressing into his presence, cries out for mercy; ver. 25. being come to that issue, to try and draw out her faith to the utmost, which was his design from the beginning, he reckons her among dogs, that were not to have children's bread given unto them. Had she now at last given over upon this severe rebuke, she had never obtained mercy; but persisting in her request, she at last prevailed, ver. 27, 28. It may be you have prayed, and cried, and resolved, and vowed, but all without success as you suppose; sin hath broken through all: however, if you give not over, you shall prevail at last; you know not at what time God will come in with his grace, and Christ will manifest his love unto you as unto the poor woman, after many a rebuke. It may be after all he will do it this day, and if not, he may do it another, do not despond. Take that word of Christ himself for your encouragement, Prov. viii. 34. 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.' If you hear him, and wait, though you have not yet admission, but are kept at the gates and posts of the doors, yet in the issue you shall be blessed.

3. The rule in this case is, Hos. vi. 3. 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know.' Are you in the way of knowing Christ in the use of means, hearing the word, and sincere endeavours in holy duties; though you cannot yet attain unto any evidence that you have received him, have closed with him, nothing can ruin you but giving over the way wherein you are; for then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord. Many can give you their experiences, that if they had been discouraged by present overwhelming difficulties, arising from their disappointments, breaking of vows, relapses into folly, they had been utterly ruined, whereas now they are at rest and peace in the bosom of Christ. On a great surprisal Christ lost at once many disciples, and they lost their souls, John vi. 66. 'They went back, and walked no more with him;' take heed of the like discouragements.

Thirdly, Some may say, yea, practically they do say, that these things indeed are necessary; they must come to Christ by believing, or they are undone; but this is not the season

of it; there will be time enough to apply themselves unto it when other occasions are past. At present they have not leisure to enter upon, and go through with, this duty: wherefore they will abide in their present state for awhile, hearing and doing many things, and when time serves, will apply themselves unto this duty also.

1. This is an uncontrollable evidence of that sottishness and folly which is come upon our nature by sin. A depravation that the apostle places in the head of the evils of corrupted nature, Tit. iii. 3. Can any thing be more foolish, sottish, and stupid, than for men to put off the consideration of the eternal concernment of their souls for one hour, being altogether uncertain whether they shall live another or no? to prefer present trifles before the blessedness or misery of an immortal state? For those who never heard of these things, who never had any conviction of sin and judgment, to put the evil day far from them, is not much to be admired; but for you who have Christ preached unto you, who own a necessity of coming unto him, to put it off from day to day upon such slight pretences, it is an astonishable folly. May you not be spoken unto in the language of the wisdom of God; Prov. vi. 9—11. You come to hear the word, and when you go away, the language of your hearts is; 'Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep;' we will abide a little while in our present state, and afterward we will rouse up ourselves. Under this deceit do multitudes perish every day. This is a dark shade, wherein cursed unbelief lies hid.

2. Consider that this is the greatest engine that Satan makes use of in the world among them that hear the word preached unto them, for the ruin of their souls. He hath other arts and ways, and methods of dealing with other men, as by sensual and worldly lusts; but as unto them who through their convictions do attend unto the preaching of the word, this is his great and almost only engine for their ruin. There needs no haste in this matter, another time will be more seasonable, you may be sure not to fail of it before you die; however, this present day and time is most unfit for it, you have other things to do, you cannot part with your present frame, you may come again to hear the word the next opportunity. Know assuredly, if your minds

are influenced unto delays of coming to Christ by such insinuations, you are under the power of Satan, and he is like enough to hold you fast unto destruction.

3. This is as evil and dangerous a posture, or frame of mind, as you can well fall under. If you have learned to put off God, and Christ, and the word for the present season, and yet relieve yourselves in this, that you do not intend, like others, always to reject them, but will have a time to hearken to their calls; you are secured and fortified against all convictions and persuasions, all fears; one answer will serve for all; within a little while you will do all that can be required of you. This is that which ruins the souls of multitudes every day. It is better dealing with men openly profligate, than with such a trifling promiser. See Isa. v. 7. 10.

4. Remember that the Scripture confines you unto the present day, without the least intimation that you shall have either another day, or another tender of grace and mercy in any day; 2 Cor. vi. 2. Heb. iii. 7. 13. xii. 15. Take care lest you come short of the grace of God, miss of it by missing your opportunity. Redeem the time, or you are lost for ever.

5. As unto the pretence of your occasions and business, there is a ready way to disappoint the craft of Satan in that pretence, namely, to mix thoughts of Christ, and the renovation of your resolutions, either to come or to cleave unto him with all your occasions. Let nothing put it utterly out of your minds; make it familiar unto you, and you will beat Satan out of that strong hold; Prov. vii. 4. However, shake yourselves out of this dust, or destruction lies at the door.

Fourthly, It is the language of the hearts of some, that if they give up themselves unto a compliance with this exhortation, and go seriously about this duty, they must relinquish and renounce all their lusts and pleasures; yea, much of their converse and society, wherein they find so much present satisfaction, as that they know not how to part with them. If they might retain their old ways, at least some of them, it were another matter, but this total relinquishment of all is very severe.

Ans. 1. The Jesuits preaching and painting of Christ among some of the Indians, concealed from them his cross and sufferings, telling them only of his present glory and

power; so as they pretended to win them over to faith in him, hiding from them that whereby they might be discouraged; and so preached a false Christ unto them, one of their own framing. We dare do no such thing for all the world; we can here use no condescension, no compliance, no composition with respect unto any sin or lust; we have no commission to grant that request of Lot, 'Is it not a little one? let it be spared;' nor to come to Naaman's terms, 'God be merciful to me in this thing; in all others I will be obedient.' Wherefore,

2. We must here be peremptory with you, whatever be the event; if you are discouraged by it, we cannot help it. Cursed be the man that shall encourage you to come to Christ, with hopes of indulgence unto any one sin whatever. I speak not this, as though you could at once absolutely and perfectly leave all sin in the root and branches of it; but only you are to do it in heart and resolution, engaging into a universal mortification of all sin, as by grace from above you shall be enabled; but your choice must be absolute, without reserves, as to love, interest, and design; God or the world, Christ or Belial, holiness or sin; there is no medium, no terms of composition; 2 Cor. vi. 15—18.

As unto what you pretend of your pleasures, the truth is, you never yet had any real pleasure, nor do know what it is; how easy were it to declare the folly, vanity, bitterness, poison of those things which you have esteemed your pleasures. Here alone, namely, in Christ, and a participation of him, are true pleasures, and durable riches to be obtained; pleasure of the same nature with, and such as like pleasant streams flow down into, the ocean of eternal pleasures above. A few moments in these joys are to be preferred above the longest continuance in the cursed pleasures of this world. See Prov. iii. 13—18.

Fifthly, It will be said by some, that they do not see those who profess themselves to be believers, to be so much better than they are, as that you need to press us so earnestly to so great a change; we know not why we should not be accounted believers already, as well as they. I shall in a few words, as well as I am able, lay this stumbling-block out of the way, though I confess at this day it is weighty and cumbersome. And I say,

1. Among them that profess themselves to be believers, there are many false, corrupt hypocrites; and it is no wonder that on various occasions they lay the stumbling-block of their iniquities before the faces of others; but they shall bear their own burden and judgment.

2. It is acknowledged, it must be bewailed, that some whom we have reason to judge to be true believers, yet through their unmortified pride, or covetousness, or carelessness in their conversation, or vain attire and conformity to the world, or forwardness, do give just occasion of offence. We confess that God is displeased herewith, Christ and the gospel dishonoured, and many that are weak are wounded, and others discouraged. But as for you, this is not your rule; this is not proposed unto you, but that word only is so that will never fail you.

3. The world doth not know, nor is able to make a right judgment of believers; nor do you so, for it is the spiritual man alone that discerneth the things of God. Their infirmities are visible to all, their graces invisible; the king's daughter is glorious within. And when you are able to make a right judgment of them, you will desire no greater advancement than to be of their society; Psal. xvi. 3.

These few instances of the pretences wherewith unbelief covers its deformity, and hides that destruction wherewith it is accompanied, may suffice unto our present purpose; they are multiplied in the minds of men, impregnated by the suggestions of Satan on their darkness and folly. A little spiritual wisdom will rend the veil of them all, and expose unbelief acting in enmity against Christ under them. But what hath been spoken may suffice to answer the necessity of the preceding exhortation on this occasion.

CHAP. II.

The way and means of the recovery of spiritual decays, and of obtaining fresh springs of grace.

THE application of the same truth, in the second place, belongs unto believers, especially such as have made any long profession of walking in the ways of God and the gospel. And that which I design herein, is to manifest, that a steady spiritual view of the glory of Christ by faith, will give them a gracious revival from inward decays, and fresh springs of grace, even in their latter days. A truth this is, as we shall see confirmed by Scripture, with the joyful experience of multitudes of believers, and is of great importance unto all that are so.

There are two things, which those who after a long profession of the gospel are entering into the confines of eternity, do long for and desire. The one is, that all their breaches may be repaired, their decays recovered, their backslidings healed: for unto these things they have been less or more obnoxious in the course of their walking before God. The other is, that they may have fresh springs of spiritual life, and vigorous actings of all divine graces, in spiritual-mindedness, holiness, and fruitfulness, unto the praise of God, the honour of the gospel, and the increase of their own peace and joy. These things they value more than all the world, and all that is in it; about these things are their thoughts and contrivances exercised night and day. Those with whom it is otherwise, whatever they pretend, are in the dark unto themselves, and their own condition; for it is in the nature of this grace to grow and increase unto the end. As rivers, the nearer they come unto the ocean whither they tend, the more they increase their waters, and speed their streams; so will grace flow more freely and fully in its near approaches to the ocean of glory. That is not saving which doth not so.

An experience hereof, I mean of the thriving of grace towards the end of our course, is that alone which can support us under the troubles and temptations of life, which we

have to conflict withal. So the apostle tells us, that this is our great relief in all our distresses and afflictions, whereon 'we faint not, that as our outer man doth perish, so the inner man is renewed day by day;' 2 Cor. iv. 16. If it be so, that in the daily decays of the outward man, in all the approaches of its dissolution, we have inward spiritual revivals and renovation, we shall not faint in what we undergo. And without such continual renovations, we shall faint in our distresses, whatever other things we may have, or whatever we pretend unto the contrary.

And ordinarily it is so in the holy, wise providence of God, that afflictions and troubles increase with age. It is so in an especial manner with ministers of the gospel; they have many of them a share in the lot of Peter, which our Lord Jesus Christ declared unto him, John xxi. 18. 'When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.' Besides those natural distempers and infirmities which accompany the decays of life, troubles of life, and in their affairs do usually grow upon them, when they look for nothing less, but were ready to say with Job, 'We shall die in our nest,' Job xxix. 18. So was it with Jacob, after all his hard labour and travail to provide for his family, such things fell out in it in his old age, as had almost broken his heart: and ofttimes both persecutions and public dangers do befall them at the same season. Whilst the outward man is thus perishing, we need great supportment that we faint not. And this is only to be had in an experience of daily spiritual renovations in the inner man.

The excellency of this mercy the psalmist expresseth in a heavenly manner, Psal. xcii. 12—15. 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like the cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.'

The promise in the twelfth verse respects the times of the Messiah, or of the New Testament, for so it is prophe-

sied of him; 'In his days the righteous shall flourish,' Psal. lxxii. 7. namely, through the abundance of grace that should be administered from his fulness; as John i. 16. Col. i. 19. And herein consists the glory of the gospel, and not in outward prosperity, or external ornaments of divine worship. The flourishing of the righteous, I say, in grace and holiness, is the glory of the office of Christ, and of the gospel. Where this is not, there is no glory in the profession of our religion. The glory of kings is in the wealth and peace of their subjects: and the glory of Christ is in the grace and holiness of his subjects.

This flourishing is compared to the palm-tree, and the growth of the cedar. The palm-tree is of the greatest verdure, beauty, and fruitfulness, and the cedar of the greatest and longest growth of any trees. So are the righteous compared to the palm-tree, for the beauty of profession, and fruitfulness in obedience; and unto the cedar for a continual, constant growth and increase in grace. Thus it is with all that are righteous, unless it be from their own sinful neglect, as it is with many in this day. They are hereon rather like the shrubs and heaths in the wilderness, which see not when good cometh, than like the palm-tree or the cedars of Lebanon. And hereby do men what lies in them, obscure the glory of Christ and his kingdom, as well as disquiet their own souls.

The words that follow, ver. 13. 'They that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God,' are not distinctive of some from other, as though some only of the flourishing righteous were so planted; but they are descriptive of them all, with an addition of the way and means whereby they are caused so to grow and flourish. And this is their implantation in the house of the Lord; that is, in the church, which is the seat of all the means of spiritual life, both as unto growth and flourishing, which God is pleased to grant unto believers. To be planted in the house of the Lord, is to be fixed and rooted in the grace communicated by the ordinances of divine worship. Unless we are planted in the house of the Lord, we cannot flourish in his courts. See Psal. i. 3. Unless we are partakers of the grace administered in the ordinances, we cannot flourish in a fruitful profession. The outward participation of them

is common unto hypocrites, that bear some leaves, but neither grow like the cedar, nor bear fruit like the palm-tree. So the apostle prays for believers, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they may be 'rooted and grounded in love;' Eph. iii. 17. 'Rooted, built up, and established;' Col. ii. 7. The want hereof is the cause that we have so many fruitless professors; they have entered the courts of God by profession, but were never planted in his house by faith and love. Let us not deceive ourselves herein; we may be entered into the church, and made partakers of the outward privileges of it, and not be so planted in it as to flourish in grace and fruitfulness.

That which on this occasion I principally intend, is the grace and privilege expressed ver. 14. 'They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.' There be three things which constitute a spiritual state, or belong to the life of God. 1. That believers be fat, that is, by the heavenly juice, sap, or fatness of the true olive, of Christ himself; as Rom. xi. 17. This is the principle of spiritual life and grace derived from him. When this abounds in them, so as to give them strength and vigour in the exercise of grace, to keep them from decays and withering, they are said to be fat, which in the Scripture phrase is strong and healthy. 2. That they flourish in the greenness (as the word is) and verdure of profession; for vigorous grace will produce a flourishing profession. 3. That they still bring forth fruit in all duties of holy obedience: all these are promised unto them even in old age.

Even trees, when they grow old (the palm and the cedar), are apt to lose their juice and verdure: and men in old age are subject unto all sorts of decays both outward and inward. It is a rare thing to see a man in old age naturally vigorous, healthy, and strong; and would it were not more rare to see any spiritually so at the same season: but this is here promised unto believers as an especial grace and privilege, beyond what can be represented in the growth or fruit-bearing of plants and trees.

The grace intended is, that when believers are under all sorts of bodily and natural decays, and it may be have been overtaken with spiritual decays also, there is provision made in the covenant to render them fat, flourishing, and fruit-

ful, vigorous in the power of internal grace, and flourishing in the expression of it in all duties of obedience, which is that which we now inquire after.

Blessed be God for this good word of his grace, that he hath given us such encouragement against all the decays and temptations of old age which we have to conflict withal.

And the psalmist in the next words declares the greatness of this privilege. 'To shew that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, there is no unrighteousness in him.' Consider the oppositions that lie against the flourishing of believers in old age, the difficulties of it, the temptations that must be conquered, the actings of the mind above its natural abilities which are decayed, the weariness that is apt to befall us in a long spiritual conflict, the cries of the flesh to be spared, and we shall see it to be an evidence of the faithfulness, power, and righteousness of God in covenant; nothing else could produce this mighty effect. So the prophet treating of the same promise, Hos. xiv. 4—8. closeth his discourse with that blessed remark, ver. 9. 'Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them.' Spiritual wisdom will make us to see that the faithfulness and power of God are exerted in this work of preserving believers flourishing and fruitful unto the end.

Having laid the foundation of this illustrious testimony, I shall farther declare and confirm my intention, so to make way for the application of the truth under consideration unto this case, manifesting, that the way whereby we may be made partakers of this grace, is by a steady view of the glory of Christ, as proposed unto us in the gospel.

There is a latter spring in the year, a spring in autumn; it is, indeed, for the most part but faint and weak, yet is it such as the husbandman cannot spare. And it is an evident sign of barren ground, when it doth not put forth afresh towards the end of the year. God, the good husbandman, looks for the same from us, especially if we had a summer's drought in spiritual decays; as the psalmist complains, Psal. xxxii. 4. Had we not had a latter spring the last year, the land had greatly suffered under the drought of the summer. And if we have had such a drought in the course of

our profession by spiritual decays, as God, the good husbandman, looks for a latter spring in us, even in old age, in the vigorous acting of grace and fruitful obedience; so without it we can neither have peace nor joy in our own souls. If a man, therefore, hath made a great appearance of religion in his former or younger days, and when he is growing into age becomes dead, cold, worldly, selfish; if he have no fresh springs of spiritual life in him, it is an evidence that he hath a barren heart, that was never really fruitful to God. I know that many stand in need of being excited by such warning, unto a diligent consideration of their state and condition.

It is true, that the latter spring doth not bring forth the same fruit with the former. There is no more required in it, but that the ground evidence itself to be in good heart, and to put forth that which is proper unto the season. It may be such graces as were active and vigorous in men at their first conversion unto God, as were carried in a stream of warm, natural affections, may not so eminently abound in the latter spring of old age; but those which are proper for the season, as namely, spirituality, heavenly-mindedness, weanedness from the world, readiness for the cross, and death, are necessary, even in old age, to evidence that we have a living principle of grace, and to shew thereby that God is upright; he is our rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

What is farther to be insisted on, shall be reduced unto these four heads:

1. That the constitution of spiritual life, is such as is meet to thrive, grow, and increase unto the end, and will do so, unless it be from the default of them in whom it is.

2. That notwithstanding this nature and constitution of spiritual life, yet believers are subject unto many decays, partly gradual, and partly by surprisals in temptation, whereby the growth of it is obstructed unto the dishonour of the gospel, and the loss of their own peace with joy.

3. I shall shew that such at present is the condition of many professors, namely, that they are visibly fallen under spiritual decays, and do not evidence any interest in the blessed promise insisted on.

4. On the confirmation of these things, our inquiry will

be, how such persons may be delivered from such decays, and by what means they may obtain the grace here promised, of spiritual flourishing in old age, both in the strengthening of the inward principle of life, and abounding in fruits of obedience, which are to the praise of God by Jesus Christ; and then we shall make application unto this case, of that truth which is the subject of the preceding discourse.

1. The constitution of spiritual life is such, as is meet to grow and increase unto the end. Hereby it doth distinguish itself from that faith which is temporary; for there is a temporary faith which will both flourish for a season, and bring forth some fruit, but it is not in its nature and constitution to abide, to grow, and increase, but rather to decay and wither. It is described by our Lord Jesus Christ, Matt. xiii. 20, 21. Either some great temptation extinguisheth it, or it decays insensibly, until the mind wherein it was do manifest itself to be utterly barren. And, therefore, whoever is sensible of any spiritual decays, he is called unto a severe trial and examination of himself, as unto the nature of the principle of his profession and obedience; for such decays do rather argue a principle of temporary faith only, unto which they are proper and natural, than that whose nature it is to thrive and grow to the end, whereon those that have it, shall, as it is in the promise, still bring forth fruit, and without their own great guilt be always freed from such decays.

That this spiritual life is in its nature and constitution such as will abide, thrive, and grow to the end, is three ways testified unto in the Scripture.

1. In that it is compared unto things of the most infallible increase and progress; for besides that its growth is frequently likened unto that of plants and trees well watered, and in a fruitful soil, which fail not to spring, unless it be from some external violence; it is likewise compared unto such things as whose progress is absolutely infallible; Prov. iv. 18. 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' The path of the just is his covenant-walk before God, as it is frequently called in the Scripture; Psal. cxix. 35. 105. Isa. xxvi. 7. Psal. xxiii. 3. Mat. iii. 3. Heb. xii. 13. and it compriseth the principle, profession, and fruits of it. This, saith the wise

man, is as the shining light; that is, the morning light; and wherein is it so? Why, as that goeth on by degrees, and shineth more and more unto the high noon (though it may be interrupted sometimes by clouds and storms); so is this path of the just, it goes on and increaseth unto the high noon, the perfect day of glory. It is in its nature so to do, though it may sometimes meet with obstructions, as we shall see afterward; and so doth the morning light also.

There is no visible difference as unto light, between the light of the morning, and the light of the evening; yea, this latter sometimes, from gleams of the setting sun, seems to be more glorious than the other. But herein they differ: the first goes on gradually unto more light, until it comes to perfection; the other gradually gives place unto darkness, until it comes to be midnight. So is it as unto the light of the just and of the hypocrite, and so is it as unto their paths. At first setting out they may seem alike and equal; yea, convictions and spiritual gifts acted with corrupt ends in some hypocrites, may for a time give a greater lustre of profession than the grace of others sincerely converted unto God may attain unto. But herein they discover their different natures; the one increaseth and goeth on constantly, though it may be sometimes but faintly; the other decays, grows dim, gives place to darkness and crooked walking.

This then is the nature of the path of the just; and where it is otherwise with us in our walk before God, we can have no evidence that we are in that path, or that we have a living, growing principle of spiritual life in us. And it is fit that professors of all sorts should be minded of these things; for we may see not a few of them under visible decays, without any sincere endeavours after a recovery, who yet please themselves that the root of the matter is in them. It is so, if love of the world, conformity unto it, negligence in holy duties, and coldness in spiritual love be an evidence of such decays. But let none deceive their own souls; wherever there is a saving principle of grace, it will be thriving and growing unto the end. And if it fall under obstructions, and thereby into decays for a season, it will give no rest or quietness unto the soul wherein it is, but will labour continually for a recovery. Peace in a spiritually decaying condition, is a soul ruining security; better be under terror

on the account of surprisal into some sin, than be in peace under evident decays of spiritual life.

And by the way, this comparing of the path of the just unto the morning light, minds me of what I have seen more than once. That light hath sometimes cheerfully appeared unto the world, when, after a little season, by reason of clouds, tempests, and storms, it hath given place again to darkness, like that of the night; but it hath not so been lost and buried like the evening light. After a while it hath recovered itself unto a greater lustre than before, manifesting that it increased in itself whilst it was eclipsed as to us. So hath it been with not a few at their first conversion unto God, great darkness and trouble have by the efficacy of temptation, and injections of Satan, possessed their minds; but the grace which they have received being as the morning light, hath after a while disentangled itself, and given evidence, that it was so far from being extinguished, as that it grew and thrived under all those clouds and darkness; for the light of the just doth in the issue always increase by temptations, as that of the hypocrite is constantly impaired by them.

Again, as it is as the morning light, than which nothing hath a more assured progress; so it is called by our Saviour 'living water,' John iv. 10. yea, 'a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life;' ver. 14. It is an indeficient spring, not a pool or pond, though never so large, which may be dried up. Many such pools of light, gifts, and profession, have we seen utterly dried up, when they have come into age, or been ensnared by the temptations of the world. And we may see others every day under dangerous decays; their countenances are changed, and they have lost that oil which makes the face of a believer to shine, namely, the oil of love, meekness, self-denial, and spirituality of converse; and instead thereof there is spread upon them the fulsome ointment of pride, self-love, earthly-mindedness, which increaseth on them more and more. But where this principle of spiritual life is, it is as the morning light, as an indeficient spring that never fails, nor can do so, until it issue in eternal life; and sundry other ways there are whereby the same truth is asserted in the Scripture.

2. There are sundry divine promises given unto believers, that so it shall be, or to secure them of such supplies of

of grace as shall cause their spiritual life to grow, increase, and flourish unto the end, such as that in the psalm which we have considered; for these promises are the means whereby this spiritual life is originally communicated unto us, and whereby it is preserved in us; by them are we made partakers of this divine nature; 2 Pet. i. 4. and through them is it continued in us. Now promises of this nature, namely, that by the dispensation of the Spirit of Christ, and supplies of his grace, our spiritual life shall flourish, and be made fruitful to the end, I shall briefly call over one of them only at present, which is recorded, Isa. xliv. 3, 4. 'I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.'

Although this promise may have respect unto the gracious dealing of God with the people of the Jews, after their return from the captivity, yet hath it so only as it was typical of the redemption of the church by Jesus Christ; but it belongs properly to the times of the gospel, when the righteous were to flourish, and it is a promise of the new covenant, as is manifest, in that it is not only given unto believers, but is also extended unto their seed and offspring, which is an assured signature of new covenant promises. And here is, 1. A supposition of what we are in ourselves, both before and after our conversion unto God, namely, as thirsty, dry, and barren ground. We have nothing in ourselves, no radical moisture to make us flourishing and fruitful. And as it is before, so it is after conversion; 'We are not sufficient of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God;' 2 Cor. iii. 5. Being left to ourselves, we should utterly wither and perish. But, 2. Here is the blessed relief which God in this case hath provided; he will pour the sanctifying water of his Spirit, and the blessing of his grace upon us. And this he will so do, as to cause us to spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. There is nothing of a more eminent and almost visible growth, than willows by the water courses. Such shall be the spiritual growth of believers under the influences of these promises; that is, they shall be fat and flourishing, and still bring forth fruit. And other promises of the same nature there are many; but we must observe two

things concerning them, that we may be satisfied in their accomplishment. As,

1. The promises of the new covenant, as unto the first communication of grace unto the elect, are absolute and unconditional; they are the executive conveyances of God's immutable purposes and decrees. And what should be the condition of the communication of the first grace unto us? Nothing that is not grace can be so. If it be said, that this also is of God in us, which is the condition of the communication of the first saving grace unto us, then I would know whether that be bestowed upon us without any condition; if it be, then that is the first grace, as being absolutely free; if it be not, then what is the condition whereon it is bestowed, concerning which the same inquiry must be made, and so for ever? But this is the glory of covenant promises, that as unto the communication of the grace of conversion and sanctification unto the elect, they are absolutely free and unconditionate. But,

2. The promises which respect the growth, degrees, and measures of this grace in believers are not so. There are many duties required of us, that these promises may be accomplished towards us, and in us; yea, watchful diligence in universal gospel obedience is expected from us unto this end. See 2 Pet. i. 4—10. This is the ordinary method of the communication of all supplies of grace to make us spiritually flourish, and be fruitful, namely, that we be found in the diligent exercise of what we have received. God doth sometimes deal otherwise in a way of sovereignty, and surpriseth men with healing grace in the midst of their decays and backslidings, as Isaiah, lvii. 17, 18. So hath many a poor soul been delivered from going down into the pit. The good shepherd will go out of his way to save a wandering sheep; but this is the ordinary method.

3. Notwithstanding these blessed promises of growth, flourishing, and fruitfulness, if we are negligent in the due improvement of the grace which we have received, and the discharge of the duties required of us, we may fall into decays, and be kept in a low, unthrifty state all our days. And this is the principal ground of the discrepancy between the glory and beauty of the church, as represented in the promises of the gospel, and as exemplified in the lives and

walking of professors, they do not live up unto the condition of their accomplishment in them; howbeit, in God's way and time they shall be all fulfilled. We have, therefore, innumerable blessed promises concerning the thriving, growing, and flourishing of the principle of spiritual life in us, even in old age, and until death; but the grace promised unto this end, will not befall us whilst we are asleep in spiritual sloth and security. Fervent prayer, the exercise of all grace received, with watchfulness unto all holy duties, are required hereunto.

3. God hath secured the growth of this spiritual life, by the provision of food for it, whereby it may be strengthened and increased; for life must be preserved by food. And this in our case is the word of God, with all other ordinances of divine worship which depend thereon; 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. Whatever the state of this life be, whether in its beginning, its progress, its decays, there is suitable nourishment provided for it in the good word of God's grace. If men will neglect their daily food that is provided for them, it is no wonder if they be weak and thriftless. And if believers are not earnest in their desires after this food, if they are not diligent in providing of it, attending unto it, much more if through corruptions and temptations they count it in the preaching of it light and common food, which they do not value, it is no wonder if they fall into spiritual decays; but God hath herein provided for our growth even unto old age.

And this is the first thing which was proposed unto confirmation, namely, that the constitution and nature of spiritual life is such, as to be indeficient, so as to thrive and grow even in old age, and unto the end.

2. The second thing proposed, is, that notwithstanding all this provision for the growth of spiritual life in us, believers especially, in a long course of profession are subject to decays, such as may cast them into great perplexities, and endanger their eternal ruin.

And these spiritual decays are of two sorts: 1. Such as are gradual and universal, in the loss of the vigour and life of grace, both in its principle, and in its exercise. 2. Such as are occasioned by surprisal into sin through the power of temptation; I mean such sins as do waste the spiritual powers of the soul, and deprive it of all solid peace.

As for temporary believers, give them but time enough in this world, especially if it be accompanied with outward prosperity, or persecution; and for the most part their decays of one sort or another will make a discovery of their hypocrisy. Though they retain a form of godliness, they deny the power of it; Prov. i. 31. [2 Tim. iii. 5.] And if they do not openly relinquish all duties of religion, yet they will grow so lifeless and savourless in them, as shall evidence their condition; for so it is with them who are lukewarm, who are neither hot nor cold, who have a name to live, but are dead.

And herein lieth a signal difference in this matter, between sincere believers, and those who believe only for a time; for those of the latter sort do either not perceive their sickness and decays, their minds being taken up and possessed with other things; or if they do find that it is not with them as it hath been formerly, they are not much concerned, and on any occasional new conviction they cry, 'Yet a little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands to sleep:' but when the other do find any thing of this nature, it makes them restless for a recovery. And although through the many snares, temptations, and deceits of sin, or through their ignorance of the right way for their healing, they do not many of them obtain a speedy recovery, yet none of them do approve themselves in such a condition, or turn unto any undue reliefs.

Now that believers are subject to decays in both the ways mentioned, we have full testimony in Scripture: for as unto that general gradual decay in the loss of our first faith, love, and works, in the weakening of the internal principle of spiritual life, with the loss thereon of delight, joy, and consolation, and the abatement of the fruits of obedience, our Lord Jesus Christ doth expressly charge it on five of the seven churches of Asia, Rev. ii. 3. And in some of them, as Sardis and Laodicea, those decays had proceeded unto such a degree, as that they were in danger of utter rejection: and hereunto answers the experience of all churches, and all believers in the world. Those who are otherwise minded, are dead in sin, and have got pretences to countenance themselves in their miserable condition. So is it with the church of Rome; and I wish others did not in some measure follow them therein.

And as unto those of the second sort, whereinto men are cast by surprisals and temptations, producing great spiritual distress and anguish of soul, under a sense of God's displeasure, we have an instance in David, as he gives us an account of himself, Psal. xxxviii. 2—10. 'O Lord, thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness,' &c.

It is certain, that here is a description of a very woful state and condition; and the psalmist, knowing that he was called of God to be a teacher and instructor of the church in all ages, records his own experience unto that end. Hence the title of it is, 'A Psalm to bring to remembrance.' Some judge that David had respect unto some great and sore disease that he was then visited withal. But if it were so, it was only an occasion of his complaint; the cause of it was sin alone. And four things he doth represent: 1. That he had departed from God, and fallen into provoking sins, which had produced great distresses in his mind, ver. 3, 4. 2. That he had foolishly continued in that state, not making timely application to grace and mercy for healing, whereby it was grown deplorable, ver. 5. And this folly is that alone which makes such a condition dangerous; namely, when men on their surprisals in sin, do not speedily apply themselves unto healing remedies. 3. That he had herein a continual sense of the displeasure of God by reason of sin, ver. 2—4. 4. That he was altogether restless in this state, mourning, groaning, labouring continually for deliverance.

This is a clearer delineation of the condition of believers, when either by the greatness of any sin, or by a long continuance in an evil and a careless frame, they are cast under a sense of divine displeasure. This opens their minds and their hearts, declaring how all things are within, which they cannot deny. It is not so with many in the same measures and degrees as it was with David, whose falls were very great; but the substance of it is found in them all. And herein the heart knoweth its own bitterness; a stranger intermeddleth not with it: none knows the groaning and la-

bouring of a soul convinced of such spiritual decays, but he alone in whom they are. Hereon is it cast down to the earth, going mourning all the day long, though others know nothing of its sorrows: but it is of a far more sad consideration, to see men manifesting their inward decays by their outward fruits, and yet are little or not at all concerned therein. The former are in ways of recovery; these in the paths that go down to the chambers of death.

I suppose, therefore, I may take it for granted, that there are few professors of religion, who have had any long continuance in the ways of it, having withal been exposed unto the temptations of life, and much exercised with the occasions of it; but that they have been asleep in their days, as the spouse complains of herself, Cant. v. 2. that is, they have been overtaken with decays of one sort or another, either with respect unto spiritual or moral duties, in their relation unto churches or families; in their judgments, or their affections; in their inward frames or outward actions, they have been overtaken with the effects of sloth, negligence, or the want of a continual watch in the life of faith: I wish it were otherwise.

I principally herein intend those gradual declensions in the life and power of grace, which men in a long course of profession are subject unto. And these for the most part proceed from formality in holy duties, under the constant outward performance of them; vehement engagements in the affairs of life, an overvaluation of sinful enjoyments, growth in carnal wisdom, neglect of daily mortification of such sins as men are naturally disposed unto, with a secret influence from the prevalent temptation of the days wherein we live, which things are not now to be spoken unto.

3. But I come to that which was proposed in the third place, namely, to shew that this at present is the state of many professors of religion, that they are fallen under those spiritual decays, and do not enjoy the effects of the promises concerning flourishing and fruitfulness, which we have insisted on. To fasten a conviction on them, or some of them at least, that it is indeed so with them, is my present design; and this ought to be done with some diligence. The glory of Christ, the honour of the gospel, and the danger of the souls of men do call for it. This is the secret root of all

our evil, which will not be removed unless it be digged up; who sees not, who complains not of, the loss of, or decays in, the power of religion in the days wherein we live? But few there are, who either know or apply themselves, or direct others unto the proper remedy of this evil. Besides, it is almost as difficult to convince men of their spiritual decays, as it is to recover them from them; but without this, healing is impossible. If men know not their sickness, they will not seek for a cure. Some when they see their sickness, and their wound, will apply themselves unto wrong, useless remedies, like them in the prophet Hosea, chap. v. 13. none will make use of any cure who see no disease at all. Wherefore, to fasten a conviction hereof on the minds of some, we may make use of the ensuing inquiries and observations.

1. Have you in the way of your profession had any experience of these spiritual decays? I doubt not but that there are some who have been preserved green and flourishing, from their first conversion unto God, who never fell under the power of sloth, neglect, or temptation, at least not for any remarkable season, but they are but few. It was not so scarce with any of those believers under the Old Testament, whose lives and walkings are recorded for our instruction; and they must be such as lived in an exact and diligent course of mortification. And some there are who have obtained relief and deliverance from under their decays, whose backslidings have been healed, and their diseases cured. So it was with David, as he divinely expresseth it, Psal. ciii. 1—5. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases: who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindness, and tender mercy: who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.' So doth he celebrate his deliverance from that state, whereof he complains, Psal. xxxviii. which we mentioned before. And there is no grace or mercy that doth more affect the hearts of believers, that gives them a greater transport of joy and thankfulness, than this of deliverance from backslidings. It is a bringing of the soul out of prison, which enlargeth it

unto praise; Psal. cxlii. 7. Of this sort I doubt not but that there are many; for God hath given great warnings of the danger of a spiritually decaying state; and he hath made great promises of recovery from it, and multitudes in the church are daily exercised herein: but I speak in general unto all. Have you any experience of such spiritual decays, either in the frame of your spirits, or in the manner of your walking before God, or at least that you are prone unto them, if not mightily preserved by the power of grace in your own utmost diligence? If you have not so, then I fear it is from one of these two causes.

1. That indeed you have never had any flourishing spiritual state in your souls. He that hath been always weak and sickly, doth not know what it is to want a state of health and strength, because he never had experience of it, much less doth he that is dead, know what it is to want life. But he that from an exquisite temper of health, falls into languishing distempers, knows distinctly, both how it was, and how it is with him. And the frame of the minds of many professors of religion, with the manner of their walking, is such, as that if they are not sensible of spiritual decays, it is evident that they never had any good spiritual health; and it is to no purpose to treat with such persons about a recovery. There are amongst those who make an outward profession of true religion, many that live in all sorts of sins. If you should deal with them about backslidings, decays, and a recovery, you will seem unto them as Lot did to his sons-in-law, when he told them of the destruction of Sodom, as one that mocked, or made sport with them, Gen. xix. 14. or you will be mocked by them for your pains. They have been always such as they are, it was never otherwise with them, and it is a ridiculous thing to speak to them of a recovery. We must be able in this case to say to men, 'Remember whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your first works;' Rev. ii. 5. They must have had an experience of a better state, or they will not endeavour a recovery from that wherein they are. Such therefore as see neither evil nor danger in their present condition, but suppose all is well enough with them, because it is as good as ever it was, will not easily be brought under this conviction; but they have

that which is of no less importance for them to inquire into, namely, whether they have had any thing of the truth of grace or no. Or,

2. If you have not this experience, it is to be feared that you are asleep in security, which is hardly distinguishable from death in sin. The church of Laodicea was sensibly decayed, and gone off from its primitive faith and obedience, yet she was so secure in her condition, knew so little of it, that she judged herself on the contrary, to be in a thriving, flourishing state. She thought herself increased in all church riches and goods, that is, gifts and grace, while 'she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;' Rev. iii. 17. in such a state as wherein it is questionable, whether she had any thing of the life and power of grace to be found in her or no. And so is it with many churches at this day, especially that which boasts itself to be without error, or blame. And it is strange that a church should suppose that it flourisheth in grace and gifts, when it hath nothing but a noise of words in their stead.

So God testified concerning Ephraim, that 'gray hairs were sprinkled on him, yet he knew it not;' Hos. vii. 9. He was in a declining, dying condition, but did not understand it. Hence it is added, 'They do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek him for all this;' ver. 10. If men will not learn, and own their spiritual decays, there is no hopes of prevailing with them to return unto the Lord; 'the whole have no need of a physician, but the sick;' Christ 'came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance:' such persons are under the power of a stupid security, from whence it will be very hard to rouse them up. Hence it is that we have so little success for the most part, in calling persons to look after a revival and recovery of their decays; they acknowledge no such thing in themselves, such calls may belong unto others; yea, if any word seem to come near them unto their disquietment, they are apt to think it was spoken out of spite and ill-will towards them; they approve of themselves in their present condition. Hence is the complaint of Christ in the ministry of the word: 'I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. Ye have set at nought all my counsel, and you would none of my reproof;' Prov. i. 24, 25. Hence let

this truth be pressed a thousand times, it is not one of a thousand who will think himself so concerned as to apply himself unto a relief. A spirit of slumber seems to be poured on many.

2. To improve this conviction, I would ask of some, whether they have been able to maintain spiritual peace and joy in their souls. I take it for granted, that ordinarily they are inseparable adjuncts of the life of faith, in an humble, fruitful walk before God. The Scripture testifieth that they are so, and no experience lies against it in ordinary cases. And I suppose that those unto whom I speak, do in some measure know what they are, and do not delude themselves with fancies and imaginations; they have substance in them, however by some derided, and to some unknown. Have this peace and joy been maintained and borne sway in your minds? Have they under all trials and surprisals been quickly composed by them? Or, are you not rather on all occasions uneasy and perplexed? This is certain, that a decaying spiritual state, and solid spiritual peace, are inconsistent: and if ever you had such peace, you may by the loss of it know into what state you are come.

3. Not to inquire farther into things internal and hidden, wherein men may justify themselves if they please, there are too many open visible evidences of these decays among professors of religion; they have not kept them from the eyes of the church, nor yet from the world. Do not pride, selfishness, worldliness, levity of attire, and vanity of life, with corrupt unsavoury communication, abound among many? The world was never in a worse posture for conformity, than it is at this day, wherein all flesh hath corrupted its ways; and yet, as unto things of outward appearance, how little distinction is left between it and those who would be esteemed more strict professors of religion! Was this the way and manner of the saints of old, of those that went before us in the same profession? Was it so with ourselves in the time of our first espousals, when we went after God in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown? as Jer. ii. 2. Some understand what I say: if we have not some of us had better days, we never had good days in our lives; if we have had them, why do we not stir up ourselves to look after a recovery?

4. May not God say of many of us, what he said of his people of old; 'Thou hast been weary of me, O Israel?' Isa. xliii. 22. Have we not been weary of God, until we have abundant cause to be weary of ourselves? The most, I presume will be ready with them in Malachi, to say, 'How, or wherein have we been weary of God?' Do we not abide, yea, abound in the duties of his service? What can be more required of us? Wherein are we to blame? This were something indeed, but that it is often so, that men are weary of God, when they even weary God with their duties and services; Isa. i. 13, 14. God says in his word, He is weary: they say in their hearts, they are weary; Mal. i. 13. But I answer,

1. Many cannot with any modesty make use of this pretence. Their sloth, indifferency, and negligence in the observance of the duties of divine worship, both in private and public, is notorious. In particular, is not the duty of family prayer neglected by many, at least as to its constancy and fervency? And although it be grounded in the light of nature, confirmed by the general rules of the Scripture, requisite unto the dedication of a family unto God, strengthened by the constant example of all the saints of old, and necessary in the experience of all that walk with God; yet do not many begin to seek out pleas and arguings to justify their omission hereof? Are not all things filled with the fruits of the negligence of such professors in the instruction of their children and servants? And hath not God given severe rebukes unto many of us in their fearful miscarriages? And as unto the public worship of God, I wish that sloth and indifferency did not appear upon too many, under various pretences. But,

2. This is not that which I do intend. Men may be weary of God, whilst they abide in the observance of a multitude of outward duties.

1. They may be so, with respect unto that spirituality and intention of mind unto the exercise of all grace, which are required unto such duties. These are the life, the soul, the animating principle of them, without which their outward performance is but a dead carcase. Men may draw nigh to God with their lips, when their hearts are far from him. This is that which becomes God in his worship, and

is useful to our own souls; for 'God is a Spirit, and he will be worshipped in Spirit and in truth;' which he is not, but in the exercise of the graces of his Spirit in the worshippers; 'For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things;' 1 Tim. iv. 8.

To keep up the mind unto this frame, to stir up all grace unto a constant vigorous exercise in all holy duties, is a matter whereunto great spiritual diligence and watchfulness is required: watch unto prayer. A thousand pretences rise against it; all the arts of sloth, formality, weariness of the flesh, and the business of life, do contend to frustrate the design of it. And the suitableness of resting in the work done unto the principles of a natural conscience, gives efficacy to them all: and when men come to satisfy themselves herein, it may be it were better that for a time such duties were wholly omitted; for in that case conscience itself will urgently call on men not hardened in sin, to a consideration of their condition: wherefore much spiritual labour and diligence is required in this matter. The outward performance of religious duties, be they never so many, or however strictly enjoined, as the daily and nightly canonical hours amongst the popish devotionists, is an easy task, much inferior unto the constant labour which some men use in their trades and callings. And in them, in the performance of them, either public or in their families, men may be weary of God: and according as they are remiss in the constant keeping up of spirituality, and the exercise of grace in sacred duties, so is the degree of their weariness. And there is almost nothing whereby men may take a safer measure of their decays or growth, than by the usual frame of their minds in these duties. If they do constantly in them 'stir up themselves to take hold of God;' Isa. lxiv. 7. it is an evidence of a good temper of spiritual health in the soul. But this will not be done without the utmost watchfulness and care against impressions from the flesh and other temptations. But sloth and formality herein, is a sign of a thriftless state in the inner man: and all inventions of such formality are disserviceable unto the interest of grace.

2. So is it with them also, who, attending unto the outward duties of religion, do yet indulge themselves in any

known sin; for there is nothing of God in those duties, which tend not unto the mortification of all sin: and men may keep up a form of godliness, to countenance themselves in the neglect of its power. And in particular, where any known sin is indulged unto, where the mortification of it is not duly endeavoured, where our religious duties are not used, applied, and directed unto that end, there is a weariness of whatever is of God in them, nor hath the soul any real intercourse or communion with God by them.

5. If we should make a particular inquiry into the state of our souls, with respect unto those graces which are most useful, and tend most to the glory of God, it is to be feared, that the decays of many would be made very evident; such are zeal, humility, contriteness of heart, spiritual mindedness, vigour of soul, and delight in the ways of God, love, charity, self-denial, and like. Are we fat and flourishing in these things even in old age? Are they in us, and do abound? as the apostle speaks, 2 Pet. i. 8. Do we bring forth the fruit of them so as to shew the faithfulness of God in his supply of grace? I shall not make a particular inquiry into them, but only give two general rules whereby we may try ourselves with respect unto them all.

1. The loss of a spiritual appetite unto the food of our souls, is an evidence of a decay in all these graces. Spiritual appetite consists in earnest desires, and a savoury relish; so it is described by the apostle, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' There is required unto this spiritual appetite an earnest desire of the word, grounded on an experience of the grace of God in it unto this end, that we may grow and thrive spiritually thereby. And this appetite will give us as just a measure of the state of grace in us, as a natural appetite unto wholesome food, with due digestion thereon, doth give of a good state of health in the body.

This, therefore, we are to inquire into. Doth it abide in us as formerly? We hear the word preached as much as ever; but do we do it with the same desire and spiritual relish as before? Some hear to satisfy their convictions, some to please their fancies, and some to judge of the persons by

whom it is dispensed. It is but in few that the necessary preparation for the due receiving of it are found.

When men grow in age, they lose much of their natural appetite unto food; they must eat still for the maintenance of life, but they do it not with that desire after it, and that gust in it as in the days of youth and health. Hence they are apt to think, that the meat which they had formerly was more savoury than what is now provided for them; though what they now enjoy is much to be preferred before what they then had; the change is in themselves. So we may find not a few professors, who are ready to think and say, that the preaching which they had in former days, and the religious exercises which they were engaged in, were far to be preferred above what they now enjoy. But the change is in themselves, they have lost their spiritual appetite, or their hunger and thirst after the food of their souls.

'The full soul loatheth the honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet;' Prov. xxvii. 7. Men being grown full of themselves, and of a good conceit of their own abilities, have lost their spiritual appetite unto the word of God; and this makes the word lose its power and efficacy towards them. That word, which the psalmist says is 'sweeter than honey, or honey-comb;' Psal. xix. 10. hath little or no taste or relish in it unto them. If they were hungry, they would find a sweetness in the bitterest of its reproofs, beyond what they can now find in the sweetest of its promises. They come to hear the word with sick desires, and low expectations, as if they were invited to eat after a feast, being self-full before. But this loss of a spiritual appetite, is an evidence of the decay of all other graces whatever.

2. A neglect of making religion our principal business, is another evidence of the decay of all sorts of grace in us. For where grace is in its proper exercise, it will subordinate all things unto religion, and the ends of it, as David twenty times declares in the hundred and nineteenth psalm. All things, all occasions of life, shall be postponed thereunto. The love and valuation of it will bear sway in our minds, our thoughts and affections, and the practice of it shall give rule unto all other concernments. But is it so with many amongst

us? It is well if religion be one thing, it is far enough from being the one thing; every other thing is preferred before it, and it can hardly crowd in to possess any place in their minds. To see men continually plodding in the affairs of the world, regulating all their actings by their concernment in them, diverting only at some seasons, as it were out of their way unto duties of religion, it is vain to say, that they make religion their business. But there is scarce a more certain evidence of a frame of mind spiritually decaying in all sorts of graces, if ever any of them were in it in sincerity and power, than this one, that men do not make religion their chiefest business. And a little self-examination will help men to judge what it is that they make so to be.

Lastly, I might also instance in the uselessness of men in their profession; in want of love unto all saints, barrenness in good works, unreadiness and unwillingness to comply in any extraordinary manner with the calls of God unto repentance and reformation; in love of the world, and pride of life, with passions suited unto such principles, predominant in them; for they are all undeniable evidences, that those with whom they are found, had never any true grace at all, or that they are fallen under woful decays. But what hath been spoken may be sufficient unto our present purpose.

This is the third thing that was proposed, namely, an endeavour to leave convictions on the minds of some concerning their spiritual decays, and the necessity of seeking after a revival by the means that shall be insisted on. And I intend it principally for those of us who, under a long profession, are now come unto age, and shall not have much time for duty continued in us. And the truth is, I meet with none, who are Christians of any considerable experience, and are spiritually minded, but they are sensible of the danger of such decays in this hour of temptation, and how difficult it is in the use of all means to keep up a vigorous, active frame of mind in faith, love, holiness, and fruitfulness. And for those who are not concerned herein, I confess I know not what to make of them, or their religion.

4. I proceed unto that which was proposed in the fourth or last place; namely, the way and means whereby believers may be delivered from these decays, and come to thrive and flourish in the inward principle, and outward fruits of spi-

ritual life; which will bring us back unto consideration of that truth which we may seem to have diverted from. And to this end, the things ensuing are proposed unto consideration.

1. The state of spiritual decays is recoverable. No man that is fallen under it hath any reason to say, there is no hope, provided he take the right way for his recovery. If every step that is lost in the way to heaven should be irrecoverable, woe would be unto us; we should all assuredly perish. If there were no reparation of our breaches, no healing of our decays, no salvation but for them who are always progressive in grace; if God should mark all that is done amiss, as the psalmist speaks, 'O Lord, who should stand?' Nay, if we had not recoveries every day, we should go off with a perpetual backsliding. But then, as was said, it is required that the right means of it be used, and not that which is destructive of what is designed, whereof I shall give an instance. When trees grow old, or are decaying, it is useful to dig about them, and manure them, which may cause them to flourish again, and abound in fruit. But instead hereof, if you remove them out of their soil, to plant them in another, which may promise much advantage, they will assuredly wither and die. So it is with professors, and hath been with many; finding themselves under manifold decays, and little or nothing of the life and power of religion left in them, they have grown weary of their station, and have changed their soil, or turning from one way in religion unto another, as some have turned Papists, some Quakers, and the like, apprehending that fault to be in the religion which they professed, which was indeed only in themselves. You cannot give an instance of any one who did not visibly wither and die therein; but had they used the proper means for their healing and recovery, they might have lived and brought forth fruit.

2. A strict attendance unto the severities of mortification, with all the duties that lead thereunto, is required unto this end; so also is the utmost diligence in all duties of obedience. These things naturally offer themselves, as the first relief in this case, and they ought not to be omitted. But if I should insist upon them, they would branch themselves into such a multitude of particular directions, as it is inconsistent with my design here to handle. Besides, the

way which I intend to propose is of another nature, though consistent with all the duties included in this proposal; yea, such as without which not one of them can be performed in a due manner. Wherefore, as unto these things, I shall only assert their necessity, with a double limitation.

1. That no duties of mortification be prescribed unto this end, as a means of recovery from spiritual decays, but what for matter and manner are of divine institution and command. All others are laid under a severe interdict, under what pretence soever they may be used. 'Who hath required these things at your hands?' Want hereof, is that whereby a pretended design to advance religion in the papacy, hath ruined it. They have under the name and pretence of the means of mortification, or the duties of it, invented and enjoined, like the Pharisees, a number of works, ways, duties, so called, which God never appointed, nor approved, nor will accept, nor shall they ever do good unto the souls of men. Such are their confessions, disciplines, pilgrimages, fastings, abstinence, framed prayers, to be repeated in stated canonical hours, in such a length and number. In the bodily labour of these things, they exercise themselves to no spiritual advantage.

But it is natural to all men to divert to such reliefs in this case. Those who are thoroughly convinced of spiritual decays, are therewithal pressed with a sense of the guilt of sin; for it is sin which hath brought them into that condition. Hereon in the first place they set their contrivance at work, how they may atone divine displeasure, and obtain acceptance with God: and if they are not under the actual conduct of evangelical light, two things immediately offer themselves unto them. First, some extraordinary course in duties, which God hath not commanded. This is the way which they betake themselves unto in the papacy, and which guilt in the darkness of corrupted nature vehemently calls for. Secondly, an extraordinary multiplication of such duties, as for the substance of them are required of us. An instance in both kinds we have, Micah vi. 6, 7. 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

ritual life; which will bring us back unto co[illegible]s, the fruit of that truth which we may seem to have diver[illegible]his means they to this end, the things ensuing are pr[illegible] condition. And sideration. [illegible]rts: first, from the

1. The state of spiritual decays is [illegible], which are multiplied that is fallen under it hath any reaso[illegible]condly, from degrees in provided he take the right way for [illegible]race. Those whose decays that is lost in the way to heaven [illegible]be diverted from attempting would be unto us; we should [illegible]and when they find them fail, were no reparation of our br[illegible] contending, and abandon them- no salvation but for them w[illegible]their lusts; for they have no evan- if God should mark all [illegible]them in another course.

speaks, 'O Lord, who [illegible] of the second sort, is this direction coveries every day, [illegible]our for a recovery from backsliding, and sliding. But ther[illegible]by a redoubled attendance unto the duties means of it be [illegible]and new obedience. Let care be taken, what is desig[illegible]matter of them they be of divine appoint- trees grow o[illegible] the manner of their performance, that it be and manur[illegible]the rules of the Scripture. Such are constant and abor[illegible]hearing of the word, prayer with fervency there- out of [illegible]watch against all temptations and occasions mise [illegible]especially an endeavour by a holy earnestness, and So i[illegible]rebukes, of the entrance of any other frame, to the [illegible]mind spiritual and heavenly in its thoughts and th[illegible] affections. v

2. Let them take heed, that they attempt not these things in their own strength. When men have strong convictions, that such and such things are their own duty, they are apt to act as if they were to be done in their own strength. They must do them, they will do them, that is as unto the outward work; and therefore they think they can do them, that is, in a due manner. The Holy Ghost hath for ever rejected this confidence, none shall prosper in it, 2 Cor. iii. 5. ix. 8. But hereby many deceive themselves, labouring in the fire, while all they do doth immediately perish; they have been negligent and careless, whereby things are come to an ill posture with them, and that peace which they had is impaired: but now they will pray, and read, and fast, and be liberal to the poor, and now an abstinence from sin. All these things they suppose they can do of themselves, because they can and ought to perform the outward works,

he duties intended do consist. Hereby Christ is the whole design, who when all is done, is the leth us, Exod. xv. 26. And there is another whatever men do in their own natural abi- cret reserve of some kind of merit in it. for these things, do aver there can be no ing, but what proceeds from our own free- at is so done, hath some kind of merit insepa- ompanying of it: and this is enough to render all ours of this kind not only useless and fruitless, but ly rejected. Faith must engage the assistance of hrist and his grace in and unto these duties; or, however they may be multiplied, they will not be effectual unto our healing and recovery. These things are to be used, according as we receive supplies of grace from above, in subordination unto that work of faith that shall be declared. Wherefore,

3. The work of recovering backsliders or believers from under their spiritual decays, is an act of sovereign grace, wrought in us by virtue of divine promises; out of this eater cometh meat. Because believers are liable to such declensions, backslidings, and decays, God hath provided and given unto us great and precious promises of a recovery, if we duly apply ourselves unto the means of it. One of the places only wherein they are recorded, I shall here call over and explain, Hosea xiv. 1—8. 'O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips,' &c. 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast out his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir-tree. From me is thy fruit found.'

The whole matter treated of in general, both as unto the

disease and remedy, is fully stated in this passage of Scripture; and that in the experience of the church, and God's dealing with them; we may therefore receive many plain directions from it, and a safe guidance in our progress, which we shall endeavour to take in the ensuing observations.

1. This application of God unto Israel, 'O Israel, return,' was made when the generality of the people were wicked and devoted unto utter destruction. So it is declared in the last words of the foregoing chapter, and their desolation fell out not long after accordingly. Wherefore, no season nor circumstances of things shall obstruct sovereign grace, when God will exercise it towards his church: it shall work in the midst of desolating judgments.

2. In such a time the true Israel of God, the elect themselves, are apt to be overtaken with the sins of the whole, and so to backslide from God, and so to fall into spiritual decays. So Israel had now done, though she had not absolutely broken covenant with God; he was yet unto her 'the Lord thy God,' yet she had fallen by her iniquity. Times of public apostacy are often accompanied with partial defects in the best; 'Because iniquity aboundeth, the love of many shall wax cold;' Matt. xxiv. 12.

3. When God designs to heal the backsliding of his people by sovereign grace, he gives them effectual calls unto repentance, and the use of means for their healing: so he doth here by his prophet, 'O Israel, return, take with you words.' And if I could see that God did stir up his faithful ministers to apply themselves in a peculiar manner, unto this work of pressing vehemently all their congregations with their duty herein; and let them know, that there is no other way to prevent their ruin, but by returning unto the Lord, according to the ways of it here prescribed; I should not doubt but that the time of healing were at hand.

4. The means prescribed unto this end, that our backslidings may be healed, in a way suited unto the glory of God, is renewed repentance: and this acts itself,

1. In fervent prayer. 'Take with you words, and say.' Consider the greatness and importance of the work before you, and weigh well what you do in your dealing with God. The matter of this prayer is twofold: 1. The pardon of all

iniquity; that is, the taking of it away: and no sin is omitted, all being now become equally burdensome; 'take away all iniquity.' When the souls of sinners are in good earnest in their return unto God, they will leave out the consideration of no one sin whatever. Nor are we meet for healing, nor shall we apply ourselves unto it in a due manner, without some previous sense of the love of God in the pardon of our sin. 2. Gracious acceptation; 'Receive us graciously.' The words in the original are only, וקח טוב, and 'receive good;' but both the words being used variously, the sense eminently included in them, is well expressed by 'receive us graciously.' After we have cast ourselves under tokens of thy displeasure, now let us know that we are freely accepted with thee. And this also lies in the desires of them who design to obtain a healing of their backslidings; for under them they are sensible that they are obnoxious unto God's displeasure.

2. Affectionate confessions of the sin, wherein their backslidings did consist, or which were the occasions of them. 'Asshur shall not save us,' &c. 'we will say no more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods.' Fleshly confidence, and false worship, were the two great sins that had now ruined the body of the people: these believers themselves had an accession unto them more or less, as now they have unto the prevailing sins of the days wherein we live, by conformity unto the world. Of these sins God expecteth a full and free confession in order unto our healing.

3. A renewed covenant engagement to renounce all other hopes and expectation, and to betake themselves with their whole trust and confidence unto him; whereof they express, first, the cause, which was his mere grace and mercy: 'for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy:' and, secondly, the effect of it, which is praise and thanksgiving: 'so will we render the calves of our lips.' And some things we may hence farther observe as unto the case under consideration. As,

1. Although God will repair our spiritual decays, and heal our backslidings freely, yet he will do it so, or in such a way, as wherein he may communicate grace unto us, to the praise of his own glory. Therefore are these duties pre-

scribed unto us in order thereunto; for although they are not the procuring cause of the love and grace from whence alone we are healed, yet are they required in the method of the dispensation of grace, to precede the effect of them. Nor have we any where a more illustrious instance and testimony of the consistency and harmony which is between sovereign grace, and the diligent discharge of our duty, than we have in this place: for as God promiseth, that he would heal their backslidings out of his free love, ver. 4. and would do it by the communication of effectual grace; ver. 5. so he enjoins them all these duties in order thereunto.

2. That unless we find these things wrought in us in a way of preparation, for the receiving of the mercy desired, we have no firm ground of expectation, that we shall be made partakers of it; for this is the method of God's dealing with the church. Then, and then only, we may expect a gracious reviving from all our decays, when serious repentance working in the ways declared, is found in us. This grace will not surprise us in our sloth, negligence, and security, but will make way for itself, by stirring us up unto sincere endeavours after it, in the perseverance of these duties. And until we see better evidences of this repentance among us, than as yet appears, we can have but small hopes of a general recovery from our present decays.

5. The work itself is declared, 1. By its nature. 2. In its causes. 3. From its effects.

1. In the nature of it, it is the healing of backslidings; 'I will heal their backslidings;' the sin whereby they are fallen off from God, unto whom they are now exhorted to return. These bring the souls of men into a diseased estate, and danger of death: the cure hereof, is the work of God alone. Hence he gives himself that title, 'I am the Lord that healeth thee;' Exod. xv. 26. And because of the poisonous nature of sin, and the danger it brings of eternal death unto the souls of men, the removal of it, or a recovery from it, is often called by the name of healing; Psal vi. 2. Isa. lvii. 18, 19. Hos. vi. 1. Here it includeth two things: first, the pardon of sin past, and then a supply of grace to make us fruitful in obedience. 'I will be as the dew to Israel,' as we shall see. This is God's healing of backslidings.

2. In the causes of it, which are, 1. The principal moving cause, and that is free undeserved love; 'I will love them freely.' From hence alone is our recovery to be expected. 2. The efficient cause, which as unto sins past is pardoning mercy; 'mine anger is turned away from him:' and as unto renewed obedience, in which two our recovery consists, it is in a plentiful supply of effectual grace; 'I will be as the dew unto Israel.' Fresh supplies of the Spirit of grace from above are so expressed: this is necessary unto our healing and recovery.

3. It is described by its effects, which is a much more abundant fruitfulness in holiness and obedience, in peace and love, than ever they had before attained. This the prophet sets out in multiplied similitudes and metaphors, to denote the greatness and efficacy of grace so communicated.

I have a little insisted on the opening of the context, for sundry reasons.

1. The case which I would consider, is in all the parts of it stated distinctly, and represented clearly unto us. There is nothing remains, but only the especial way whereby in the exercise of faith this grace may be obtained, which is that which I shall speak unto in the last place, as that which is principally intended in this discourse.

2. That I might shew how great a thing it is to have our spiritual decays made up, our backslidings healed, and so to attain the vigorous acting of grace and spiritual life, with a flourishing profession, and fruitful obedience in old age; it is is so set forth here by the Holy Ghost, as that every one must needs have a sense of the beauty and glory of the work: it is that which divine love, mercy, and grace, are eminently effectual in unto the glory of God, that which so many duties are required to prepare us for. Let no man think that it is a light or common work, every thing in it is peculiar: it is unto them who are made partakers of it, a life from the dead.

3. That none may utterly despond under their decays. When persons are awakened by new convictions, and begin to feel the weight of them, and how implicately they are entangled with them, they are ready to faint, and even to de-

spair of deliverance. But we see that here is a promise of deliverance from them by pardoning mercy, and also of such fresh springs of grace as shall cause us to abound in holiness and fruitfulness. Who is it that is entangled with corruptions and temptations, that groans under a sense of a cold, lifeless, barren frame of heart? he may take in spiritual refreshment, if by faith he can make application of this promise unto himself.

4. That which remains, is to declare the particular way whereby in the exercise of faith, we may obtain the fruit of this and all other promises of the like nature, unto the end so often proposed; namely, of being flourishing and fruitful even in old age. Now supposing a due attendance unto the duties mentioned, I shall give some directions with respect unto that which gives life, power, and efficacy unto them all, and which will infallibly bring us unto the full enjoyment of this signal mercy: and they are these that follow.

1. All our supplies of grace are from Jesus Christ. Grace is declared in the promises of the Old Testament; but the way of its communication, and our receiving of it, is revealed unto us in the New. This belongs to the mystery of it, that all grace is from Christ, and shall be in vain expected any other way. He hath assured us, that 'without him we can do nothing;' we can no more bring forth fruit, than a branch can that is separated from the vine; John xv. 3—5. He is our head, and all our spiritual influences, that is, divine communication of grace, are from him alone. He is our life efficiently, and liveth in us effectively, so as that our ability for vital acts is from him; Gal. ii. 20. Col. iii. 1, 2. Are we then any of us under convictions of spiritual decays? or do we long for such renovations of spiritual strength, as may make us flourish in faith, love, and holiness, we must know assuredly, that nothing of all this can be attained, but it must come from Jesus Christ alone. We see what promises are made, what duties are prescribed unto us; but however we should endeavour to apply ourselves unto the one or the other, they would yield us no relief, unless we know how to receive it from Christ himself.

2. The only way of receiving supplies of spiritual strength and grace, from Jesus Christ, on our part, is by faith. Hereby we come unto him, are implanted in him, abide with him, so as to bring forth fruit. He dwells in our hearts by faith, and he acts in us by faith, and we live by faith in or on the Son of God. This I suppose will be granted, that if we receive any thing from Christ, it must be by faith, it must be in the exercise of it, or in a way of believing; nor is there any one word in the Scripture that gives the least encouragement to expect either grace or mercy from him in any other way, or by any other means.

3. This faith respects the person of Christ, his grace, his whole mediation, with all the effects of it, and his glory in them all. This is that which hath been so much insisted on in the foregoing discourses, as that it ought not to be again insisted on: this therefore is the issue of the whole. A steady view of the glory of Christ, in his person, grace, and office, through faith, or a constant lively exercise of faith on him, according as he is revealed unto us in the Scripture, is the only effectual way to obtain a revival from under our spiritual decays, and such supplies of grace as shall make us flourishing and fruitful even in old age. He that thus lives by faith in him, shall by his spiritual thriving and growth, 'shew that the Lord is upright, that he is our rock, and that there is no unrighteousness in him.'

We may consider briefly; first, how this is testified unto in the Scripture, and then what are the ways whereby this grace or duty will produce this effect; and so put a close unto this part of the application of the sacred truth before declared.

1. This direction is given us, Psal. xxxiv. 5. 'They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed.' That it is Christ, or the glory of God in him, that is thus looked unto, I need not prove, it will not be denied. And it is their faith which is expressed by their looking unto him; which is nothing but that beholding of his glory which we have described: for it is an act of trust arising from an apprehension of who and what he is. The issue or effect hereof is, that they were lightened; that is, received fresh communication of spiritual, saving, refreshing

light from him, and consequently of all other graces, whence their faces were not ashamed; nor shall we fail in our expectation of new spiritual communication in the exercise of the same faith.

This is that which we are called unto, Isa. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth.' On this look to Christ, on this view of his glory, depends our whole salvation; and therefore all things that are needful thereunto, do so also: this is the way whereby we receive grace and glory. This is the direction given us by the Holy Ghost for the attaining of them.

So is the same duty described, Micah vii. 7. 'Therefore I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.' The church knew not any other way of relief, whatever her distresses were.

A look unto Christ as crucified (and how glorious he was therein, hath been declared), is made the cause and fountain of that godly sorrow, which is a spring unto all other graces, especially in those who have fallen under decays; Zech. xii. 10. and it is so also of desiring strength from him, to enable us to endure all our trials, troubles, and afflictions, with patience unto the end; Heb. xii. 2.

The only inquiry remaining, is, how a constant view of the glory of Christ will produce this blessed effect in us: and it will do so several ways.

1. It will be effected by that transforming power and efficacy, which this exercise of faith is always accompanied withal. This is that which changeth us every day more and more into the likeness of Christ, as hath been at large before declared. Herein all revivals and all flourishings are contained. To have a good measure of conformity unto Christ, is all whereof in this life we are capable: the perfection of it is eternal blessedness. According as are our attainments therein, so is the thriving and flourishing of the life of grace in us, which is that which is aimed at; other ways and means it may be have failed us, let us put this to the trial. Let us live in the constant contemplation of the glory of Christ, and virtue will proceed from him to repair all our decays, to renew a right spirit within us, and to cause us to abound in all duties of obedience. This way of pro-

ducing these effects, flesh and blood will not reveal; it looks like washing in Jordan to cure a leprosy: but the life of faith is a mystery known only unto them in whom it is.

2. It will fix the soul unto that object which is suited to give it delight, complacency, and satisfaction. This in perfection is blessedness, for it is caused by the eternal vision of the glory of God in Christ: and the nearer approaches we make unto this state, the better, the more spiritual, the more heavenly is the state of our souls. And this is to be obtained only by a constant contemplation of the glory of Christ, as hath been declared. And it is several ways effectual unto the end now proposed. For,

1. The most of our spiritual decays and barrenness arise from an inordinate admission of other things into our minds; for these are they that weaken grace in all its operations. But when the mind is filled with thoughts of Christ and his glory, when the soul thereon cleaves unto him with intense affections, they will cast out, or not give admittance unto, those causes of spiritual weakness and indisposition. See Col. iii. 1—5. Eph. v. 8.

2. Where we are engaged in this duty, it will stir up every grace unto its due exercise, which is that wherein the spiritual revival inquired after, doth consist. This is all we desire, all we long for, this will make us fat and flourishing, namely, that every grace of the Spirit have its due exercise in us. See Rom. v. 3—5. 2 Pet. i. 5—8. Whereas, therefore, Christ himself is the first proper adequate object of all grace, and all its exercise (for it first respects him, and then other things for him), when the mind is fixed on him and his glory, every grace will be in a readiness for its due exercise. And without this we shall never attain it by any resolutions or endeavours of our own, let us make the trial when we please.

3. This will assuredly put us on a vigilant watch and constant conflict against all the deceitful workings of sin, against all the entrances of temptation, against all the ways and means of surprisals into foolish frames, by vain imaginations, which are the causes of our decays. Our recovery or revival will not be effected, nor a fresh spring of

grace be obtained, in a careless, slothful course of profession. Constant watching, fighting, contending against sin, with our utmost endeavour for an absolute conquest over it, are required hereunto. And nothing will so much excite and encourage our souls hereunto, as a constant view of Christ and his glory; every thing in him hath a constraining power hereunto, as is known to all who have any acquaintance with these things.

END OF VOL. XII.

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